Polyhedron

NEWSZINE

SPECIAL ISSUE!

Welcome to the RPGA® Network!

Inside this issue:

- the joy of clubs
- worldwide gaming
- break into the industry

and MORE!

122
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It's Time to Start Networking.

Welcome to the world's largest organization dedicated to role-playing and adventure games. This issue of the Newszine provides ideas to all members, new and old, about what the Network does, who the members are, and how to get involved. So start "Networking" here

4&5 Meet your Network staff, Scott, Robert, and Jeff. Our only thought, day and night, is to make your role-playing experience easier and more enjoyable.

6 We included a **Regional Directors** (RDs) list. RDs are long-time members you can ask about gaming and clubs in your area. They want to help you, so get in touch. They're an indispensible resource.

7 With offices in the U.K. and Australia, we're slowly covering the entire Earth. Find out what gaming's like where you're not in our **World of Gaming** section.

8 **Conventions** are a large part of RPGA Network support, and our tournament program ensures that you can find quality games to get into at a con. Members share their own opinions here, too.

20&21 Roger Moore writes a world-building article that is raw idea fodder every month in **A World of Your Own**. Check him out and see if you don't come up with a few bright ideas of your own.

18&19 **Welcome to the Nightmare** is the first of a three part series by Gary Labreque discussing horror games. This issue: why horror isn't fantasy.

22&23 Our **Clubs** are some of the best things we have going at the RPGA. Members form lifelong friendships in clubs...and rivalries between them.

24&25 You'll want to stop and read our **Members Serving** page, too. The Network provides numerous services, but the real service comes when members give back.

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Polyhedron® NEWSZINE

RPGA® NETWORK

Publisher	Network Coordinator	Production Staff	Network Administration	Polyhedron Editor
TSR, Inc.	Scott Douglas	Dave Conant Terry Craig	Robert Weise	Jeff Quick

We included a special little form for **Registering Network Clubs** as well as a survey to give us information about your club. It'll help us help you to have it. We're also just curious!

9

Many members are interested in how our **Point System** works. We dispel the mystery here, along with some info on our top-scoring members.

10

13-17

11&12

Elminster's Everwinking Eye is a monthly column written by TSR's own FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign sage, Ed Greenwood. Currently, Elminster is on his own tour around the Border Realms of Faerun.

LIVING™ CAMPAIGNS

- On page 13, you'll read whyDave Baker is worked up about the world's largest shared-world campaign: the LIVING CITY™.
- "Uncle Wes" Nicholson spills his guts on his favorite campaign,Virtual Seattle, all over page 14.
- Steven Jay and Robert Farnsworth want you to read page 15—all about the Network's demi-human campaign—the LIVING JUNGLE™.
- Fans of Earthdawn can't skip page 16. That's where Shaun Horner explains how to get into the *Threads of Legend* campaign.
- Andrew Rothstein tells us on page 17 why he'd rather live in the past of the LIVING DEATH™ game.

FORMS & GUIDELINES

- Page 27 begins a section about submissions to the Newszine, including our writers' guidelines.
- Guidelines continue on page 28, including ethics and art guidelines.
- Back issues of POLYHEDRON Newszine are available! We have a "mini-ad" for them on page 29, and we're letting them go for a song. Buy now, before we run out!
- Before you submit anything to the Newszine, you'll need to copy and fill out our Standard Disclosure Form. It's on page 30.
- Then on page 31 are forms for Classifieds and Conventions. These are free services to members, so please take advantage of them!

27-31

32 **Notes From HQ**—our blab at the end.

26 **Writing for the Network**—two of our top writers tell why and how about writing for the Network. Take notes.

but this is just the start! Turn the page and get to it!

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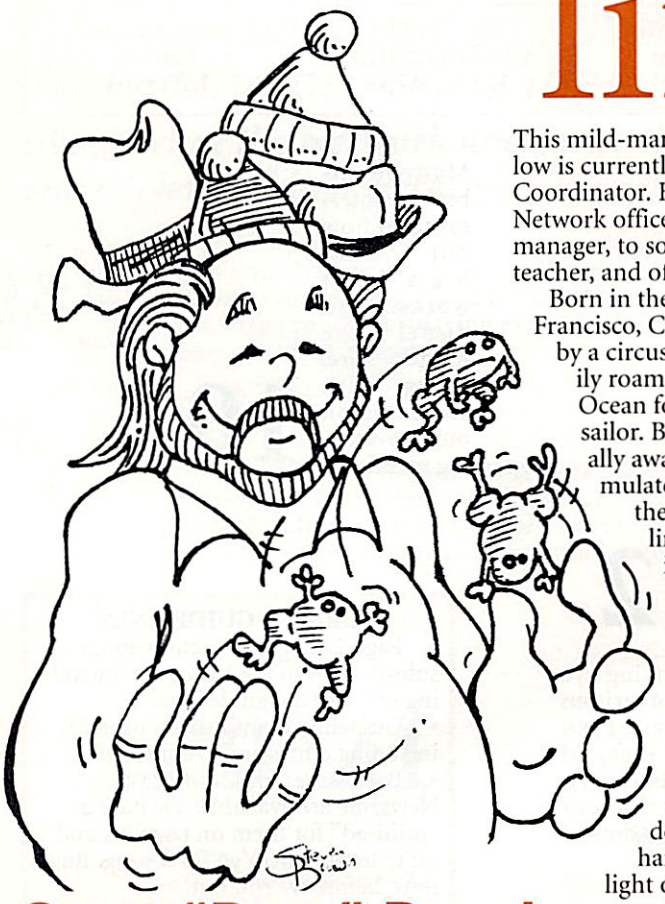
Larger than life

Play the RPGA staff as NPCs!
Kill us mercilessly or make us campaign kings!



Scott "Papa" Douglas

RPGA Network Coordinator
9th Level Male Human Bard (jongleur)

STR:	11	**Height:**	5' 9"
DEX:	13	**Weight:**	220 lbs
CON:	14	**Age:**	37
INT:	14	**Hair:**	Brown
WIS:	10	**Eyes:**	Brown
CHA:	15		
COM:	12	**Armor:**	8 (thick hide)
		THAC0:	14
		Hit Points:	33

Weapon Proficiencies: Scimitar, quill pen, juggling ball, paper cut, singing (+2)

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: singing (at –2), dancing (in and out of controversy), disguise (hat wearing specialist), juggling (paperwork), juggling (job responsibilities), juggling (member needs), juggling (small objects), Local History (LIVING CITY™), Local History (RPGA Network), ancient history (pedagogy), fast talk, origami

This mild-mannered, good-hearted fellow is currently in disguise as Network Coordinator. He roams the halls of the Network offices appearing to many as a manager, to some as a misplaced teacher, and often just confused.

Born in the wild hills around San Francisco, California, Scott was raised by a circus family. He and his family roamed the sunny Pacific Ocean following his father, a sailor. Becoming totally spiritually aware at the age of 9, he formulated a brilliant plan to rule the world—by first controlling the most influential international gaming organization he could find.

His plan involved juggling degrees in Theater and Education, years of summer stock theater, and employment in every job he could find: carpenter, derrickman, actor, stage hand, usher, singer, spotlight operator, clerk, stocker, paperboy, biscuit cutter, night watchman, elementary school teacher, museum educator, and head waiter. Armed with this vast selection of juggling accomplishments, he worked his way onto the Network stage.

Scott's first Network juggling appearance as a role player was at the 1988 GEN CON® Game Fair. Through the years at this event he's worn hats of GM, marshal, volunteer, and security. In January of 1995, he used his fast talk ability to convince the guildmasters at TSR of his willingness and qualification to be Network Coordinator.

His job offers him opportunity to travel, game, and meet new friends, but he has also found that he is responsible for "budgets" and "marketing." In addition, he's constantly inundated with "quick questions" from members, which is a famous Network oxymoron. Nonetheless, Scott works hard to serve the best interests of all members.

Mostly Scott's job involves juggling. In addition to juggling his personal and professional lives, he's often responsible for keeping as many as 20 projects in the air at once (though he starts to struggle at 11). He's always juggling members' wishes against what is practical, and is constantly amazed to what extent members are willing to help keep balls in the air.

When Scott's not at work, he reads incessantly, tutors reading and science students, attends a lot of conventions, and plays historical miniatures. He likes to camp and hike, and loves to walk old Civil War battlefields.

He's passionate about his children, Judy and Marie, and wishes his job responsibilities allowed him to spend more time with them. Scott's also passionate about future of the role-playing hobby—he believes that this is a "human" technology for the next millenium.

Character interactions:

Robert: This guy is Scott's right arm (and left brain). Scott feels he can confide in Robert, and know that he's getting a straight response. Scott trusts Robert with important decisions, and stands behind him when others disagree.

Jeff: This fellow is Scott's right brain (and left hand). While Scott is still learning about Jeff, he's very impressed with Jeff's commitment, creativity, juggling ability, and sense of humor. He thinks Jeff's taste in music is pretty groovy too!

Your Network Staff loves to hear from you about what's happening or what's important in your part of the world. Write to us at:

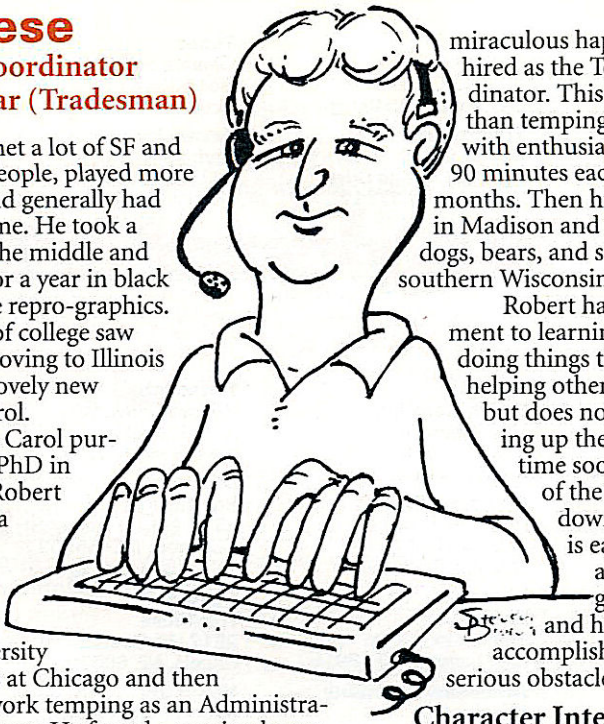
RPGA Network HQ
201 Sheridan Springs Road
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Or email at:
rpgahq@aol.com
or
TSR.RPGA@genie.com

Please allow a little time for us to reply; after all, there are 10,000 of you, and just four of us...
...three of us, actually. At press time, the Network is short one clerk. By the time you read this, we will not be short. Look for her (or his) NPC in the October issue of the Newszine!

Robert Wiese

Network Tournament Coordinator
Human Male 9th Level Scholar (Tradesman)



Born and raised in California, Robert sought adventure throughout his youth. He was active in the Boy Scouts and his church, camped with his family, swam, played sports with his friends without distinguishing himself, and otherwise spent a lot of time outdoors. Ah, the halcyon days of youth. While in the Scouts he discovered roleplaying games, and this put him on the road to becoming an indoor-type. High school introduced him to a second love, technical theater. He was always handy with gadgets, so lights and sound equipment naturally appealed to him.

College (UCLA) whizzed by; Robert achieved a Bachelor's degree in Math and Physics, met a lot of SF and gaming people, played more games, and generally had a good time. He took a break in the middle and worked for a year in black and white repro-graphics. The end of college saw Robert moving to Illinois with his lovely new bride, Carol.

While Carol pursued her PhD in Physics, Robert achieved a Masters degree in the subject from the University of Illinois at Chicago and then went to work temping as an Administrative Assistant. He found a gaming home with an RPGA club, and was introduced to something called the RPGA Network. A dog and a cat decided to grace his home with their presence; they still do. In January of 1995 Robert shifted scholarly focus and enrolled in a seminary to study theology, which in an odd way is related to physics.

Meanwhile, he achieved an ambition and attended his first GEN CON Game Fair, and each year following he attended a little more of it, so eventually he stayed for the whole show. He began writing tournaments, judging, and helping out, and then the miraculous happened; he was hired as the Tournament Coordinator. This was much better than temping, so he accepted with enthusiasm and commuted 90 minutes each way for three months. Then his wife found a job in Madison and the couple (with dogs, bears, and so on) moved to southern Wisconsin.

Robert has a deep commitment to learning, to his faith, to doing things that matter, and to helping others. He likes to write, but does not see himself moving up the TSR ladder anytime soon. The atmosphere of the Network suits him down to the ground. He is easy-going generally, always looks for the good side of things, and has a knack for accomplishing things despite serious obstacles.

STR:	11	**Height:**	6'
DEX:	13	**Weight:**	208 lbs
CON:	10	**Age:**	30
INT:	15	**Hair:**	Brown
WIS:	16	**Eyes:**	Green
CHA:	11		

Armor: 10
THAC0: 16 (+4 bonus to hit with intellectual weapons)
Hit Points: 20

Weapon Proficiencies: Logic, Humor, Sarcasm, Rifle, Short Bow
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Administration and Planning, Ancient Religion, Engineering (computers), English Language x3, Physics, Religion x2 (specialization–Christianity), Teamster (cars)
Knack: Miracle-working

Character Interactions:

Scott Douglas: Scott is a great guy, and Robert likes working with him. They get along very well, and frequently lunch together and make lots of important Network-shaking decisions. Scott's more of a control freak than Robert is, which puts Robert's life in perspective.

Jeff Quick: Jeff is a great guy, and Robert likes working with him. Jeff is still naive, but he tries hard and shows great creativity. Editing POLYHEDRON is a hard job, with pressures from many directions, but Jeff holds out well and manages to show great enthusiasm, which puts Robert's more jaded opinion in perspective.

Jeff "Zippy" Quick

POLYHEDRON Newszine Editor

When I was a child, I spoke as a child.
I wish I could remember what I said.
—Todd Snyder, "I Spoke as a Child"

Breed: Homid
Auspice: Ragabash
Tribe: Bone Gnawer
Pack Name: RPGA
Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence (lateral thinking) 4, Wits 3
Abilities: Dodge 1, Empathy 2, Expression (writing) 4, Intimidation 2, Animal Ken 1, Drive 2, Performance 2, Computer 2, Editing 3, Enigmas 2, Pop Culture 3, Religion 2
Backgrounds: Allies 3, Resources 1
Gifts: (1) Cooking, Persuasion, Resist Pain, Smell of Man
Rank: 1
Rage 2, Gnosis 3, Willpower 4
Renown: Glory 1, Honor 2, Wisdom 1

Born in Nashville, Tennessee in 1971, Zippy grew up in what Flannery O'Connor would call "a disappointingly normal childhood." He spent an inordinate amount of time running around Baptist churches in his youth, yet amazingly hasn't developed a contempt for modern religion.

An oddity among Bone Gnawers, Zip currently holds down a regular job as POLYHEDRON Newszine editor. Despite a paycheck, he still eats food off of other people's plates, and will eat butter for money.

More than food, his true love is comic books. Starting with *Captain Carrot and his Amazing Zoo Crew* #7 at age 10, he now owns more comics than he's ever bothered to count, including a prized, first print Tick #1. He can often be seen at comic book stores digging for back issues of Usagi Yojimbo and early '80s independent comics. He bemoans the lack of the Cartoon Channel in Lake Geneva, but he doesn't even have a TV, so he's really just whining.

Occasionally Zip can be seen building houses with Habitat for Humanity or working at homeless shelters. He aspires some day to Roam the Earth and Do Stuff. He is intractably flippant when writing personal bios.

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...and what they do

What does a regional director do? Should an RD be the tournament coordinator at conventions in his or her region? How should the RD do business? Does the director have a mailing budget? How does the RD get reimbursed for necessary expenses? Why would someone want to be an RD in the first place?

RDs have the opportunity to promote many Network programs through their involvement. They encourage submission of quality scenarios for conventions. They may attend local conventions to assist with administrative and judging duties, and provide instruction on Network procedures for voting, scoring, and advancement. They might conduct meetings in public venues to discuss the Network and answer questions.

RDs assist HQ by overseeing gaming events held in their region. They can monitor the numbers and titles of certain scenarios played in their region, to help avoid overplay. They can accept comments and suggestions from both members and non-members, and relay them to HQ. A successful RD acts as a public relations liaison for the Network.

Most importantly, the RD can help actively encourage non-members to play in Network events and join the Network. Further, an effective RD is one who assists local conventions that do not run Network tournaments, facilitating the incorporation of Network events into their programming.

There are some duties that HQ does not expect a regional director to perform. RDs should not feel compelled to attend every convention or gaming event in their region, and should certainly not feel they need to coordinate each one. RDs should, as volunteer providers of a valuable service, expect some non-monetary form of compensation from any convention which actively invites their assistance, in the form of free admission, special room rates, complementary room space, or some other agreed upon consideration.

An RD should never operate their regional office like a branch office. Tournaments for use at conventions and other gaming functions must always be paid for, approved, and sent out from Network HQ. It is never acceptable for an RD to sanction events, or to allow sanctioned events' use without HQ approval.

Unless approved by HQ, a regional director should never take money for memberships they might have sold, instead of having the new members send the money themselves.

Unfortunately, we can not adequately compensate RDs for their service. Likewise, we cannot supply a budget for mailing or copying. For Network regional directors, we ask that receipts be kept, and forwarded occasionally to HQ. We do our utmost to return a reasonable value in product for personal use (not prize support). In addition, we try to provide opportunities for RDs to feel rewarded by HQ. Sometimes the reward might be a T-shirt, sometimes a breakfast ticket, but we try to make RDs feel appreciated.

Some members ask us how one is appointed Regional Director. The basic answer is: we look to see who is already one of the most helpful and friendly members in a given area, then we ask if he or she will accept the position. Sometimes candidates are too busy with other activities—Network members are active people, after all. Often, they accept right away, and immediately ask how they can help!

We encourage all Network members to get to know their RDs; they are each experienced members with a wealth of experience and information to share. They're darn nice folks, too!

A WORLD OF MEMBERS

Wes Nicholson
Freeforming—an Australian concept

I often get asked, "What does the RPGA Australian Branch do?" Well, first off, it's actually the SW Pacific Branch, since we have members in New Zealand, Malaysia, and Brunei as well as Australia.

As to what we do, well pretty much the same as in North America, with a couple of differences. We do a lot less of the AD&D® game than North America does—maybe we're happier to experiment, maybe it's just different tastes—who knows? We don't do the LIVING CITY™ campaign at all. We do at least two Virtual Seattle games a year, more if we can.

And we do freeforms.

A freeform is sort of what North Americans call an "interactive", and sort of what Europeans call Live-Action Role-Playing (we do LARP as well, but not usually at cons). A freeform consists of about 10 to 100 players, all in a common environment, all there for reasons of their own as well as the supposed reason (often a social gathering, a coronation, wedding, or murder). In contrast to interactives, in a freeform each player has a number of objectives, which may be as simple as "make as much money as you can", or as complex as "make sure XYZ is implicated in the crime (whatever THAT may be)". A popular objective with some freeforms is "Get ABC to sleep with you". This can be especially funny for everyone else if ABC is an overweight, bearded male (and so are you).

What! I hear you cry - that objective must breech Network ethics guidelines. Indeed it does, and that's not an objective allowed in any Network sanctioned freeform.

One thing that freeforms, interactives, and LARP seem to have in common is costumes. Some regular freeformers take four or five costumes to a con so they'll have just the right one. One friend of mine takes three suits to each con, because he "just can't" wear the same one twice. To get the right costume, you have to know in advance which character you'll get. Fortunately, the con scene in this part of the world is small enough so that it's usually possible to phone the author and ask for a character, then pick or make a suitable costume.

But the best thing about freeforms is starting a rumor and seeing if you recognize it when it gets back to you. The more outrageous the rumor, the more fun the players will have with it—especially the one(s) who started it.

Queen Victoria, Australia

Sandy Douglas
European Conventions

As a regular attendee at British RPG Conventions, I have at times cast envious eyes over the long lists of American conventions as I waited the months between our own events. While still casting wistful glances over the huge lists of events at the GEN CON® Game Fair and wishing for a fairy godmother to get me there, at least I find that the time between conventions here seems to be shortening.

The European GEN CON Game Fair is now firmly established, DrakCon (my own Glasgow convention) celebrated its tenth year this July, a number of other events have established themselves, and three brand new events have been acclaimed successful and promise to return.

Although I have as yet not tasted my first American con, from what I have heard and read, there seem to be differences. The main difference is scale. With the exception of the European Game Fair, most events here have at most a couple hundred people attending. One American told me last year at DrakCon that it was his first British con (He obviously had been here long enough to have learned the difference between British and English, especially when speaking to a Scot!) and that although his first impression had been disappointment with the number of people there, by the end he felt it was one of the best he had attended. Another difference is that British gamers seem to be less interested in personalities. Most gamers I know are far more interested in playing than meeting or listening to guests.

I urge all gamers to try at least one convention. I know that most regular convention attendees here look forward to a trip to at least one American event. I would suggest that those of you in the States should try to make it the other way as well. After all, if it is refreshing to meet new gamers at a local event, how much more could it be to exchange styles and ideas with those from a whole new continent? By the way, DrakCon'97 will be next July—not only do we have an excellent little con, but we can also provide a base for a holiday visiting castles, ancient monuments, and the Scottish scenery.

For more details on European events, contact John Brown at European HQ or check out information at our web site: www.drakcon.wintermute.co.uk/drakco

Glasgow, Scotland

Eric Kline
Gaming Hawaiian Style

Aloha gamers everywhere from the 50th state! I would like to take this opportunity to share the Hawaii gaming experience with all of you, and explain how the RPGA Network provides us with the events and support which attract new members.

The Dedicated Oahu Gamers' Society (D.O.G.S.) boasts a membership of over 50 members; we finished third in last years' Club Decathlon competition. While you may think that our events are played on scenic estates overlooking the ocean with temperatures in the mid 80's, you would be incorrect. Only our slot zeros are played like this.

Actually, gaming in Hawaii is not very different than anywhere else in the country (or the world). We have a love for gaming (especially LIVING CITY events), and we do our best to contribute to local charities as well as supporting our own members. The main difference between the mainland and ourselves is that we really can't participate in out-of-state conventions. This is where Network support really helps our club.

This year's calendar consists of four two-day conventions, three one-day events, and one club invitational (a members-only event at which the club picks up all costs—including dinner). If you combine the quality of the events, the structure of LIVING™ campaigns, the Network's prize support, and the energy of the games themselves, it is not hard to attract new players and keep old ones happy. DOGS, the Network, and gaming in general have a bright future in Hawaii. We look forward to creating additional clubs here on Oahu, and with our new friends on Maui, we hope to see clubs throughout all of the islands. We hope to put on our own cruise convention in the year 2000, and we're continually improving venues for local events.

Look for a DOGS website in the near future, as well as further Network participation. We'll also be sending some members to compete in this years' GEN CON Game Fair events; we're the other folks wearing Aloha shirts. We look forward to seeing many of you there. Or better still, why don't we expect to see you at some of ours?

Honolulu, Hawaii

Gail Reese
How Do You Get Involved?

What can you do at convention? Well, there are lots of ways RPGA members can get involved in conventions, as I have learned over the past year. When I moved to New England in May '95 and found conventions almost every weekend, I decided to learn more about them by volunteering. Here's some of what I learned about the kinds of things an enthusiastic volunteer can do.

1. **Gamemaster.** It seems you can never have too many of these folks in New England, especially for LIVING CITY™ events. Knowledge of the game, roleplaying ability, preparation, self confidence, and a willingness to have fun is what it takes to be successful as a convention GM.

2. **Marshal/ Coordinator.** If you're a take-charge sort of guy or gal, this is your job. Marshals make sure that players get sent to the proper tables. Coordinators make certain that the gamemasters have all the character sheets, scoring packets, handouts, and information they need to judge (they get judges to the proper tables, too). A loud mouth, a good attitude, and organizational skills are the hallmarks of these kinds of volunteers.

3. **Headquarters staff.** These are the people who really run the show. They are the people who direct people to gathering areas, sign-up new members, answer questions, score the packets, keep track of advancement and prize winners, and push ALL the paper. Without a skilled and dedicated HQ staff, nothing would get done (they order the tournaments in the first place). In order to be good at HQ staff, you need some basic math, sales skills, and lots of organization.

Those of us in New England are lucky to have, on the average, about two conventions a month to which to donate our time. Of course, there are many from this region that travel to Georgia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, Florida, and Canada just to help out there. Just as many people travel here and give us a hand.

Volunteering is work (don't let anyone tell you different), but the rewards outweigh the lack of sleep. Meeting even more people, finding new talents, and helping other RPGA members have a great time, that's what making a great convention happen is all about. At least, that's what I keep telling myself.

Springfield, Massachusetts

TO BOLDLY GO...
...Network Members at Conventions

Agnes V. Thompson
Judging at Conventions

I have been playing AD&D® for about ten years now, and I started running games about six years ago. I volunteer at conventions and Game Masters Ltd. club events for a variety of reasons. I enjoy both playing in tournaments and running them.

One reason I run games is because there always seems to be a shortage of judges. If there aren't any judges, nobody gets to play. I think it's terrible for players to sign up for a game, only to be turned away because there isn't anyone available to run it.

There is also a certain amount of challenge to running a game that isn't present when you're playing in it. As a judge, you have to be familiar with the scenario, because players will always do what isn't expected. You have to be able to keep everyone interested, (which isn't always easy with six players at the table). You also have to try and keep the game moving so that your players don't get bored.

When I first started running for the gaming group at home, I was really nervous. Judging at conventions helped boost my confidence for running my own home campaign. The really nice thing about judging a table at a convention is that after four hours, the game's over.

I've made a lot of friends by judging at conventions. When you have a table full of complete strangers, the players find it easy to identify with the GM. I've met some of my best friends by judging tables at gaming conventions.

I really enjoy encouraging people to role-play. It can be difficult for the GM to have players that are new to role-playing at a table, but it can be very rewarding. It's fun to watch players come out of their shell and really get into role-playing a character.

Vista, California

Laura Braslow
Online Conventions

So, you've read this far, and you're getting excited about these gaming convention things. But then the awful reality hits you—how many conventions are you really going to be able to go to? Maybe there aren't many in your area, or maybe you just can't afford more than one or two a year. You are on the brink of despair...until you see the heading of this section!

Online conventions! You have a computer, you have a modem—that's all you'll need to attend the conventions run by TSR's official sites on GEnie and America Online. It's like a dream come true. You read on for more information.

GEnie, the home of the oldest official TSR site online, has held 21 conventions to date, called Conlines. Conlines usually consist of two days worth of gaming slots—either four or five—and occur four times a year. Prizes are offered, and a good time is had by all. And they have more than games—most Conlines feature one or more guest speakers as well. The GEnie online RPGA clubs—LAMP (Legendary Association of Modem Players) and the UCC (Universe Construction Company) often run seminars and trivia sessions during Conlines as well.

America Online's somewhat newer FOG (Fellowship of Online Gamers) group has just started holding conventions—the first one called Americon. I wasn't in attendance myself, but I was told it it was a great event.

So, you're thinking, these online conventions sound pretty cool, but you have one question—what do they cost? And there is one simple answer—nothing! There is no fee at all for online conventions, aside from the usage fees levied by GEnie and AOL. So what are you waiting for? Check out the official TSR sites on GEnie and AOL and find out when the next online convention is. You won't be disappointed.

Kingston, New York

RPGA® Network Club Program

Gaming with the RPGA Network gets even better when you belong to a Network Club.

The ROLE PLAYING GAME ASSOCIATION™ Network Clubs are special. Network clubs are able to participate in clubs-only competitions at conventions such as the GEN CON® Game Fair and WINTER FANTASY™ convention in the United States, and at other conventions elsewhere in the world. They can take part in the annual gaming decathlon, a year-long challenge of gaming, writing, and service events, leading to trophies, prizes, fame, and fortune! Clubs get discounts on gaming products. They participate in membership drives. Clubs are eligible to play-test new game products before they hit retail shelves; consequently, clubs can have a direct impact on the games themselves. Network clubs attract the best quality gamemasters and players to their memberships, a benefit to each and every club member. Best of all, clubs are great ways to meet with old friends, or to make new friends, friends interested in the same games, the same worlds, the same fun!

Rank of Club	# of Network Members
Fellowship	6–25
Guild	26–50
Conclave	51-75
Assembly	76 and above

The fee to charter a club is just $20! In exchange for this fee, the club receives great game products for its library. Clubs are also eligible to receive a special monthly mailing, keeping them apprised of all the latest happenings in the world of RPGA Network gaming, with club news and current decathlon standings.

Renewals are free, as long as the club keeps its address current with Network Headquarters, and files a club directory form each fall. To seek and hold a charter by the RPGA Network, a gaming club must have at least six members who are also current members of the Network.

Please tell us something about your club:

Which role playing games does your club play?

Which other games does your club enjoy?

Where does your club meet?

When, and how often does your club meet?

Club Name:_____ **Club Phone: ( )**_____

Club Address:_____ **City:**_____

State/Province:_____ **Country:**_____ **Postal Code:**_____

Club President's Name:_____ **Phone: ( )**_____

Address:_____ **City:**_____

State/Province:_____ **Country:**_____ **Postal Code:**_____

When this application is completed, please send it, the $20 fee, and a list of Network members and their numbers to:
RPGA Network, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147, Attn: Clubs Program

Don't miss the excitement! Join Today!

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POINT SYSTEM

Many new RPGA Network members ask about the point system. What is it? How does it work? How many points do I need to become a master-level player (3rd level)?

Here's a brief explanation of the system:

The Network sponsors role-playing tournaments throughout the world. Last year the Network sent tournaments out to over 250 conventions in the English-speaking world. (The only thing stopping us from running events elsewhere is a shortage of talented volunteer translators—hint, hint.)

These tournaments use a special voting system to determine who played best and how well the referee ran the game; each player fills out a ballot that has a section for evaluating the referee and a space for listing the four best players. The votes each player earned are then totaled and the highest-scoring player is declared the winner. When members participate in these events, HQ records the results. The more tournaments you play, and the better you do in those events, the more points you earn.

As you gain points you are assigned player and judge levels. These levels reflect experience, modified by quality of performance. When you reach 3rd level, you become a Masters Level player or judge; at 5th level, you are proclaimed a Grand Masters Level player or judge; and at 7th level, you have reached the Paragon Level of playing or Judging. Special tournaments are available to Masters, Grand masters, and Paragons.

By the way, Don Bingle of Colorado is the ranking Paragon player in the world, at 9th level with almost 500,000 points. Jay Tummelson of Illinois is the ranking judge (9th level with over 600,000 points). The ranking European member is John Brown (who was hired by TSR Ltd. because of his vast convention experience).

Network members can also receive points for writing tournaments, participating in membership drives, writing articles for the POLYHEDRON Newszine, and for coordinating or assisting at conventions. These are called "service points" and help build your level as a player or judge.

When you renew your membership to the Network, you receive an updated membership card. In addition, player and judge rankings appear on your monthly Newszine label.

Sometimes members ask us to print the point formula so you can keep a running total of your points. On the surface that sounds easy; you could tell at anytime how many points you had, right? No.

If Network HQ printed the point formula, the only way you could keep a running total of your points was if you knew exactly how each player and judge voted for you in every event—and how the judge ranked the overall performance of each group you games with. Otherwise, you would not be able to apply those scores to the formula. This goes beyond knowing whether you came in first, second, third, or last in an event. In the spirit of fair play, Network HQ doesn't want that information released. There could be an awful lot of hurt feelings if someone learned they came in dead last with 0 votes or if they learned their best friend sitting right next to them didn't vote for them at all. Besides, we think voting could be unduly influenced if a tournaments' participants knew the way they voted would be revealed to other players.

It's also a matter of practicality. It would be impossible to allow all the players to review all the tournament packs so they could record all their scores. Tournament coordinators don't have time to handle that; they have to concentrate on running the convention and events. To top it off, you might see your tournament score at a convention, record your results, and then become confused when you get a different total from HQ. You see, sometimes the people scoring tournaments at conventions make mistakes. They are under a lot of pressure to score things quickly so advancements can be posted and winners announced. Sometimes the numbers aren't transcribed or added correctly. This rarely means someone was awarded first place when he or she finished second. But it can mean that a person got a score of 25 instead of 20 during a round because the numbers were added incorrectly.

Therefore, you won't see the point formula in print.

However, we can certainly see why players are interested in the point system. They often want to know how many tournaments they would have to play in to make a certain level. The ranking player, Don, estimates that he's played in over 300 scenarios since he's joined. Jay, the ranking judge, has copies of over 400 scenarios he's run over the years.

For those of us who have played and judged fewer times than Don or Jay, we asked the TSR computer department to review the scores of all players from the beginning of our tournament program and come up with an average points award a player might expect to get for participating in various events.

PLAYERS RANKINGS

Level/Title	Point Range
0 Novice	0-749
1 Player	750-2249
2 Gamer	2250-5249
3 Campaigner	5250-11249
4 Strategist	11250-23249
5 Tactician	23250-48249
6 Leader	48250-98249
7 Paragon	98250-198249
8 Adventurer	198250-398249
9 Master Adventurer	398250-698249
10 10th Level M.A.	698250-1098249
11 11th Level M.A.	1098250-1598249
12 12th Level M.A.	1598250-2189249

JUDGES RANKINGS

Level/Title	Point Range
0 Rookie	0-999
1 Speaker	1000-2999
2 Arbiter	3000-6999
3 Moderator	7000-14999
4 Proctor	15000-30999
5 Referee	31000-62999
6 Mastermind	63000-126999
7 Tribune	27000-246999
8 Judge	247000-486999
9 Game Master	487000-846999
10 10th Level G.M.	847000-1326999
11 11th Level G.M.	1327000-192699
12 12th Level G.M.	1927000-2646999

At 3rd level a player or judge becomes eligible to participate in Masters-level tournaments. Triple points are awarded for Masters events.

At 5th level a player or judge becomes eligible to participate in Grand Masters-level tournaments. Quadruple points are awarded for Grand Masters events.

At 7th level a player or judge becomes eligible to participate in Paragon-level tournaments. Quintuple points are awarded for Paragon events.

Players and judges of any level can participate in Benefit tournaments. All cash proceeds from Benefit events are donated to a worthy charity. Double points are awarded for Benefit events.

Point Examples

(averages based on actual results)

One Round Tournaments

Place	Points
1st	801
2nd	646
3rd	487

Two Round Tournaments

Place	Points
1st	921
2nd	839
3rd	691

In addition, you receive points for participating in the first round of the event, an average of about 300 points for finishing first, second or third in that round.

Three Round Tournaments

Place	Points
1st	1,084
2nd	960
3rd	724

In addition, you receive points for participating in previous rounds; placing third through first in the first round average between 150 and 300; placing third through first in the second round average from 350 to 550.

For a complete history listing each tournament judged and played, send $2US (check or money order) to Tournament History, RPGA Headquarters, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Gallard

"Like A Sword Coast Seaport"

by Ed Greenwood

Elminster's eager to tell me dark secrets about which royal families of Faerûn have indulged in late-night entertainments that resulted in illegitimate heirs later ascending to the thrones. He agrees that it would be irresponsible to reveal the details of such shaky thrones to all, so he's whispering to me alone. (Sorry.) Suffice it to say that some of you who've complained that King Xoblob or Queen Shuttledar don't act like true monarchs are on to something.

Our tour of the Border Kingdoms is nowhere near done though, and accordingly, this column deals with:

Gallard

Westernmost of the Border Kingdom settlements that guard the Shaar trails, the walled town of Gallard is home to many locksmiths, pewterers, tinsmiths, potters, enamellers, corvisers (shoe- and bootmakers), leatherworkers, and smallsmiths (makers of hinges, fastenings, corner-caps for chests and coffers, and edgings for doors, panels, and slots); in short, a hive of skilled craftworkers and closely-guarded wealth, as well as the real seat of power in the Land of Two Princes (of which more will be said later).

Every Galardian merchant has a personal bodyguard and an amanuensis (clerk, scribe, and bookkeeper), and most hire at least another three "trustyblades" to guard their home and workplace when they're not there. This vigilance is due to a history of nomad and brigand raids out of the Shaar, but these days it is increasingly a matter of ceremony, custom, and status.

Gallard is one of the busiest and most prosperous places in all the Border realms, but is also one of the most grasping and grubby, "like a Sword Coast seaport:" Its folk have earned the dislike of some Borderers for being unfriendly, self-important, and "sharp" in their dealings.

It is also known colloquially (among unfriendly folk) as "Dungstink Sty" because of two sites that lie within sight of the walls southwest and southeast of town.

Shaarsar, to the southeast, is a large market where farmers bring cattle for slaughter (and transformation into the spicy "trailmeat" known to so many Faerunian adventurers and caravan-guards). Ong's Batar, to the southwest, is a reeking cluster of tanneries that feed the ever-busy craftsmen of Gallard.

South of the road that links Shaarsar and Ong's Batar lies a chaotic mass of encamped caravans and horse-dealers. Mounts stolen anywhere in the Border realms may arrive here for sale with astonishing speed, and from time to time dopplegangers are discovered in horse-shape here, hoping to be sold to lone travelers whom they

can devour.

Gallard itself is a crowded place of winding cobbled streets and mud-and-gravel alleys between steep-roofed, crowded, timbered houses that rise four or five floors above street level. They typically have storage cellars and kitchens below, with a rear chimney flanked by a dumbwaiter and chutes to drop laundry and refuse to lower levels, and bring kitchen smells and heat up into any floor that has its metal shaft screen open.

The visitor will search in vain for grand palaces and civic buildings; business is conducted by going to a shop to meet the proprietor and if desired, repairing together to one a"firesword house" in town to dine and deal.

Want to see money flow like water—and folk doing something to earn it? Get to Gallard. It's unlovely, but the closest thing Border-derers have to Waterdeep's Dock Ward. I was born there—but, hey, lad—don't tell anyone now.

Orthil Marimmalar
Master Merchant of Zazesspur
in conversation in Port Kir
Year of the Sword

Firesword houses get their name from the skewers that constantly sizzle over central cooking fires, bearing roast fowl, sausages, hams, and diced meats. These (plus meat-and-sauce pies whose recipes are guarded secrets) can be had by any diner, typically for 1 sp for a heaping plateful, along with pickles, pickled fish, and a "mint mix" of diced radishes, parsnips and carrots, a plate of hotbreads, and much drink to wash it all down. This includes ale, zzar, "smoke-spiced" ciders, teas, and wines.

Galardians use firesword houses as meeting places for business transactions as well as sources of food. They rent private rooms or at least curtained booths, plus minstrels to make noise or "fenders" (guards who make sure no one steals close to listen), in most of the better houses. Sleeping accommodations aren't available at such establishments (officially, at least), nor do they deal in stabling or safe-storage. There's also little price competition, though the largest houses deliver hot food to visitors camped outside the town walls for steep fees.

If Gallard can be said to have a seat of government, it's the Risen Dragon Finest Fireswords on Ovirstreen Street, owned and operated by Ulgarth Hithtor (LN hm F16), a grizzled, balding old warrior who runs the Galardian Council of Bodyguards and Trustyblades, the organization that licenses every town resident who customarily bears a weapon outside his or her own home. This Council keeps the peace in Gallard by mounting Council patrols (typically veteran F6s or higher who anticipate traps and laugh at attempted bribes) and enforcing the laws it passes. These include "no sale of tainted or deceitful goods, no sale or possession of poison, no extortion, no attacking rivals or their goods or premises, no theft, and no murder." Penalties include stiff fines, property confiscations, and often exile, (called "under the Ban"). It should be noted that the "Watchful Helms" (Council patrol warriors) are allowed to employ sleep venom to shoot thieves.

Visitors and citizens come "updragon" (to the Risen Dragon) to pay their "sword taxes," hear Council justice, and register the hiring of bodyguards or trustyblades.

Mercenary companies per se aren't allowed to operate in Gallard, but there are a number of weapons-trainers who equip and train warriors in town, forming the stalwarts of the Council: Ithtyn Mearin (NE hm F14; his trainees are entitled to wear a badge of an amber griffon's head on a red oval); Nander Philglar (NG hm F12; his badge is a black eel on a red oval); Jhalassan Dreir (LN hf F15; her badge is a white striking hawk on a green oval); and Bunder Breldayr (NG hm F11; his badge is a yellow eagle's head on a green oval). Ulgarth Hithtor's own trainees wear a badge of a white turret on a black oval.

Of the three dozen or so other firesword houses in town, the Black Buck and Oster's Manyfires are the most famous. The Scowling Tankard is known locally as the best place to hire for shady dealings.

Few streets in Gallard are named, but three every visitor should know are Sellserpent Street, that runs southwest to northeast from town gate to town gate; Rithtor Street, which wiggles southeast to northwest from gate to gate, forming a giant 'X' and linking all four gates in the town wall, and Orlyn's Way, which makes a giant circle inside the city wall, meeting with all major streets. Ovirstreen Street runs east to west clear across town, just north of the meeting of Sellserpent and Rithtor, to enclose a central triangle that holds Gallard's most important and luxurious inns, the Proud Phantom (Good/Expensive) on the west, and Sharyn's Smiling Sphinx (Excellent/Expensive) on the east. Between them stands The Tarrasque At Twilight, a pretentious, dimly-lit, cavernous tavern that boasts dancers and minstrels day and night in "grotto" rooms (Good/Expensive). Its bouncers wear fanciful tarrasque masks, and are rumored to include several drow and a doppleganger who impersonates guests who've gone missing.

More typical of the run-down, cramped taverns of Gallard is The Blade And Bucket (Fair/Cheap) on Mysker Street (just east off Rithtor, one street north of Orlyn's Way), where pipesmoke and the steam of fried fish sandwiches mingle in a crowded, dimly-lit labyrinth of pillars and tables.

In short, Gallard is a place of bustling commerce, not a romantic backwater of awaiting adventure or bucolic beauty. In the words of one local: "Gallard's necessary...like a privy or rubbish-heap." ❑

David Baker on LIVING™ Campaigns

Eiderdown stroked the burnished mahogany wand, its smooth surface sending electric shocks of excitement into the neophyte halfling. "My...," the stunned young man stammered.

"Yes, obviously o'er hastily I judged your people. You have demonstrated a true and noble heart. Perhaps it will be of use someday—"

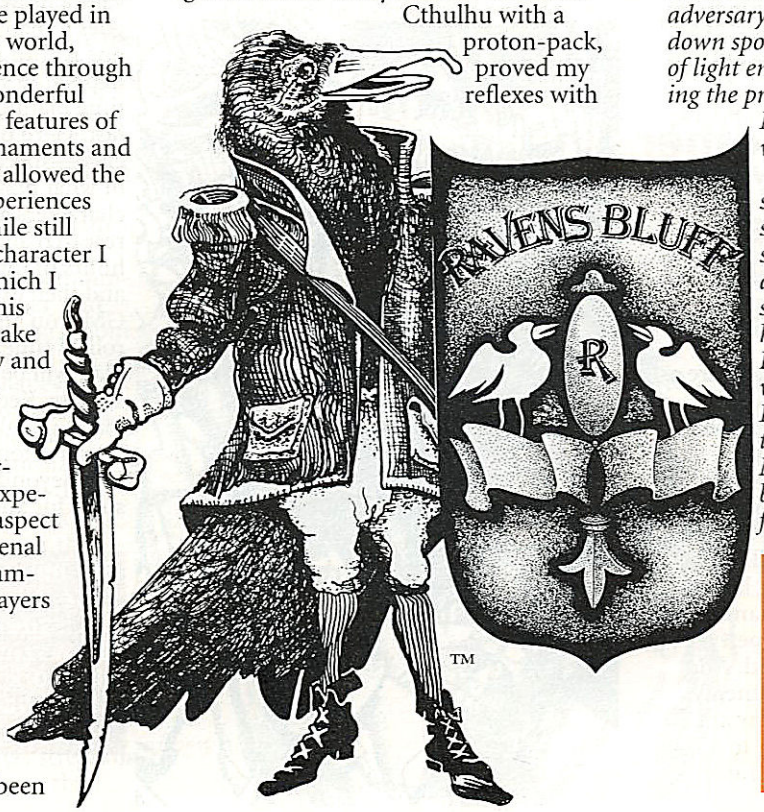
"Most certainly!" the halfling interrupted the paladin. "Have you heard how such wands emit the light of Mystra's wisdom? That reminds me of a fable about Mystra I really must share.."

LIVING CITY™

Sanguine Remembrances of RAVENS BLUFF™

Very personal and fond memories such as these are perhaps the most significant reason why my involvement with the LIVING CITY campaign has been one of thorough delight. While pleasant anecdotes are a feature of any game setting, almost every LIVING CITY player is filled with fond recollections. By design, the campaign is conducive to such enjoyment All LIVING™ campaigns share one basic concept: Players generate their own characters which can be played in conventions throughout the world, gaining treasure and experience through their efforts. This has the wonderful result of combining the best features of traditional convention tournaments and homespun campaigns. I am allowed the opportunity to share my experiences with hundreds of others, while still maintaining a close tie to a character I alone created, a character which I nurture and guide through his life. I have a very personal stake in seeing this character grow and develop at every game table, where I will be sitting with players similarly involved and impassioned. Such a formula leads to exciting, fun experiences. Yet this is only one aspect that has lead to the phenomenal success of the LIVING CITY campaign. More importantly, players are given the opportunity to assume prominent roles in determining the fate of this shared world. Numerous positions within the government of RAVENS BLUFF, the LIVING CITY focus, have been presented to the members. While my low-level halfling priest has neither the desire nor the qualifications for these esteemed appointments, many grand adventures have been made even more thrilling by fighting alongside high government officials. Players have other ways of defining the evolution of RAVENS BLUFF, through the avenue of writing. Most of the literature about our fair city has been authored by players, published through such media as POLYHEDRON® Newszine, LIVING CITY supplements, and scenarios. These scenarios are a prominent facet of game conventions. Open any convention booklet and you are bound to find several opportunities to promote your character. At a large convention, I advanced my eager and energetic halfling from first through fourth levels, a feat I assure you is not atypical. Every scenario provides immediate benefits and gratification; Eiderdown's career has never been routine. All of this fun is set in the roleplaying genre dearest to my heart. I've blasted Cthulhu with a proton-pack, proved my reflexes with my Peacemaker, and fought off posers alongside my chombattas. Variety has been a rejuvenating elixir for my roleplaying, but nothing compares to the pleasure of immersing myself in a medieval fantasy game. Fearsome dragons and fickle gods hopefully remain only legend as we fight the slightly more mundane—terrible liches, diabolical sorcerers, and nefarious thieves. I'm sure that many of you hold this traditional setting in a similarly unique and fond regard.

If you haven't done so, I hope you'll join us in our fantastic adventures. But don't grumble if an unassuming little halfling pulls up a chair next to you in your favorite tavern. Heroics originate from the most unlikely sources.



Alexander stumbled as struck again by the putrescent Zombie Master, while the other companions were fairing little better. The young halfling dropped his mace and revealed his recently acquired wand. Positioning himself between the hideous adversary and the faltering knight, Eiderdown spoke the command. An explosion of light enveloped the area, nearly blinding the priest, but injuring the Zombie Master and his minions far worse.

Though most of his undead slaves crumbled to dust, the hellsent foe stood fast. Enraged, it struck a solid blow to Eiderdown's midsection. A horrifying sensation flowed through him as his life's essence nearly escaped. Recognizing the newly begotten wand would be all but useless, Eiderdown intoned the words that would once again release Mystra's great light—this time bringing the battle to a hard-fought, triumphant conclusion.

"A Player's Guide to the LIVING CITY Campaign" is available from HQ. This contains the official campaign house rules, and is continually updated as changes occur. Send US$6 to the address listed on page 4. Remember to tell us what the six bucks are for...

Wes Nicholson on Living™ Campaigns

Tell It To Them Straight: Virtual Seattle

So, you think you'd like to try life in the Shadows? Can you sleep with one eye open? Can you train yourself to move before you think? Can you handle life when every day is kill or be killed? Can you remember the only person you can always trust is yourself? If you answered Yes to all these questions, read on. Maybe we can use your skills before some guy who's bigger and faster cuts you down.

Virtual Seattle is the RPGA Network's "bring your own character" Shadowrun campaign. Being a convention-based campaign, the rules are a little different from your home campaigns and for very good reasons. Your character will start out a little tougher than the standard rules, especially if you want to play a magical type (there are several of those, but that's another story). Virtual Seattle doesn't use any of the newer books—yet. That means all the neat stuff in Fields of Fire and anything that came out after it is not allowed now, but the flip side is that if you can't have it, neither can the opposition. Well, that's the theory...but who said life was fair?

In Virtual Seattle, if you can take the other guy's toys away from him, you can have them (usually).

That's how some FoF and other goodies have crept into the campaign.

Being a Shadowrun game, there are a few basics that need to be sorted out, especially if you cut your teeth on the AD&D® game. First off, there is no "good" or "evil" in Shadowrun—there's only "us" and "them". Like all good rules, this has exceptions. Insect spirits are evil and almost everyone will forget their differences to deal with the larger threat. Toxic Spirits and their shamans are also a good reason to forget petty squabbles over a few bites of food. And always pray you never meet the enemy. For Earthdawn players, the enemy are the Horrors, preparing yet again to come from their world to ours. But enough of that digression—back to VS.

In Shadowrun, the folks you're on a run with today may well be hired to do wetwork on you tomorrow. Sad, but true. To tone things down a bit for VS, Ron and Margaret Heintz gave every character the same fixer (person who organises your jobs) and she doesn't go for straight assassinations.or unnecessary violence, so it's safe to assume you can trust your fellow runners. Or is it? That's the way it is in the Shadows, you never know what could be next. As a Shadowrunner, you are a criminal. It's that simple. You have no regular job (like a sarariman does) to pay the bills, and you aren't even a number in the system to get social security (such as it is). You are a nobody, and the authorities (It can be very messy sometimes as to just who they are) would just as soon blow you away as take you in and have to do the paperwork. In VS, this hasn't been toned down, so keep your head low.

Getting back to unnecessary violence, everyone knows that criminals have no smarts, so they kill anyone who isn't them. So, how clever is it of a criminal gang (i.e. your team) to use gel (stun) bullets, and other non lethal weapons? Surely that's a great way to throw suspicion on a more professional group of troubleshooters—like a corporate hit team? Food for thought there, chummers.

Shadowrunners in VS are among the most wanted criminals in Seattle, but not on Post Office walls. The major corps like to hire runners like your character to do their dirtywork. They pay well, but remember that a corp might pay you with a bullet instead of a credstick, and they are using you because they don't want to risk valuable corporate assets (hit teams). You are expendable—at least in their eyes.

If it all sounds pretty bleak, it's supposed to. This is not a game where the good guys always win. Often the good guys take heavy casualties and only salvage a draw, and sometimes everything goes to hell in a hand basket. There's one way to make sure that DOESN'T happen to you, and that's to take lots of time planning the job, and then do it fast. Hard or soft makes no difference—speed is what counts. In terms of what players should do to keep their characters alive, figure on doing research and planning for about two hours of the three hours playing time, and then execute your plan. A good GM won't let you bog down with dice rolls if time is getting short; a good plan will be given a good chance of success. Keep that in mind when you play Virtual Seattle, and your character may live long enough to think about Life Beyond the Shadows (but that's a story for another time).

For more information on Virtual Seattle, order the June 1995 issue of the POLYHEDRON Newszine (107) for US$3 from Network HQ. Be sure to specify you want the Virtual Seattle update as well. It's free.

Steve Jay & Bob Farnsworth on LIVING™ Campaigns

MALATRA™, THE LIVING JUNGLE

Enjoyable role-playing does not occur in a vacuum. You need a rich atmosphere and background to provide a foundation for your character's personality. There should also be a logic, however subjective, to guide how the charatcer reacts. Finally there should be a story that gives characters interesting goals to complete.

The LIVING JUNGLE™ has many of the elements necessary for great role-playing. More than any other LIVING setting, the geography and peoples of the LIVING JUNGLE setting provide fertile material for players and authors alike to immerse themselves ina world rich with myth, culture, scenery, history, and wonder.

Deep in the most remote jungles south of the Forgotten Realms oriental setting of Kara-Tur is a vast plateau called MALATRA. MALATRA is isolated from the rest of Toril by sheer cliffs that raise it thousands of feet from the jungle floor.... Also, the jungle below is filled with a dense population of carnivorous dinosaurs that will rend any unwary travelers that approach. MALATRA is hidden by powerful magics that obscure the plateau from the outside world and prevent anyone from approaching its borders, inside or out.

MALATRA is as mysterious as the "Dark Continent" was to Europeans in the last century. Stories about vast elephant graveyards, lost cities filled with gold, ancient forbidden ruins, dark magics, hidden passages, mighty mountains and rivers, great white apes, and murderous natives... MALATRA has room for all of these and more.

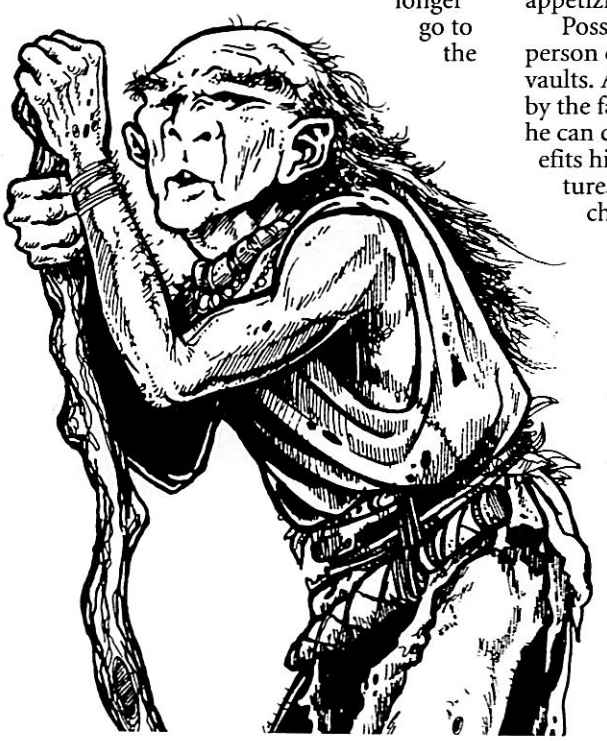
There are several places that even MALATRA natives are afraid to explore. Its greatest mysteries await the courageous explorer. What causes the heavy mists that stretch from the Sleepy Lake down the Dreaming River to Kumo Swamp? Why do none who enter the swamp ever return? What about the dread Valley of Spirits, where alien screams of terror fill the fog-shrouded depths? Or the Yaku Plains where once a mighty jungle thrived, but now is a gray, ash-filled plain of that only powerful shamans and witch doctors dare visit?

One of the setting's greatest strengths is its people and the varied races that live there. Some role-playing settings do not require characters to go beyond ordinary fantasy stereotypes. The typical dwarf is a typical height, likes gold, doesn't have a real life outside of dungeon crawling, etc. The LIVING JUNGLE setting provides many opportunities to go beyond the typical.

For example, your character is a Monkey Katanga (shapeshifter) witch doctor. A normal spellcaster would stay to the rear of the party, hiding behind fighters. *Your* witch doctor's favorite spell is *spook* and whenever the party goes into a fight, your character charges his opponents, screeching at the top of his lungs.

Mystery surrounds your character as she travels through the jungle. Are those harmless animals following you or the dreaded Leopard Katanga? Is the towering shape ahead the ruins of a long-lost civilization, or a Tyrannosaurus Rex ready to tear you and your companions limb from limb?

Ordinary tasks of eating and sleeping take on a new meaning when you no longer go to the nearest inn and pay a gold piece for a feast and a bed. The thrill of finding a treasure chest is replaced by the thrill of bringing home an animal carcass that came close to eating the party. Now it will feed the village for a week.



The economy is not based on some lifeless metal. The few precious metals are only used for ornamentation.

A system of barter encourages a type of role-playing that a setting with money almost never sees. It requires the player characters to negotiate for what they need. Negotiation requires its participants to learn what is valuable to another party. This means interaction, discussion, and role-playing between characters and NPCs is vital to the game.

Beliefs and location play an important part in all of this. The six main human tribes all see things differently (not to mention the nonhuman tribes) mostly because of where they live. Each has different values and may be looking to fill different needs. A Nubari (human) living on a river may think that a fish he can catch any day isn't as appetizing as gazelle steak.

Possessions are limited to what one person can carry. There are no banks or vaults. A sense of community is fostered by the fact that once a hero has all that he can carry, the remainder usually benefits his tribe or the party he adventures with. Success relies on what a character's actions, cooperation, and cleverness rather than what he owns.

Living in MALATRA means being more closely tied to the land than in traditional fantasy settings. The jungle is everywhere, the source ofeverything. It also means that a threat to the jungle is a threat to everyone. Though isolated from Toril, the people of the LIVING JUNGLE are never isolated from each other.

LIVING JUNGLE information packets are available for US$5 from Network HQ.

Shaun Horner on LIVING™ Campaigns

WEAVE A NEW WORLD

THREADS OF LEGEND

It's a great time to be an active member of the RPGA Network. With a broad-based appeal and the sheer number of games to participate in, it can be a daunting task to determine which ones you'll like. One of the best new things to come to the Network is the interactive game, *Threads of Legend. Threads* is based on FASA's Earthdawn game system. Whereas it is slightly different from its RPG counterpart, the flavor has been kept and enhanced for those familiar with the system. For those not familiar with the system, you are in for a treat.

Like other interactive events such as LIVING CITY™, players create their own characters for this fantasy game. Character creation resembles the game itself—a character emerges into the world, and like the player, doesn't really know what's going on. Learning to play this way offers the bonus of playing first, and learning as you go.

The setting is a world where people are just emerging from their hiding places after their world was ravaged by a magical evil known as Horrors. This game world makes it easy for players who have not role-played in it because the character's history might center around the idea that they've been locked away with no contact with the outside world.

Finally, when completing the characters, you are asked to complete a short story of your character's background. This story is sent to the Great Library of Throal (Drew Caldwell, the guy running the show), and depending on the story and its appeal, you can gain Legend Points that count towards your character's experience.

During the game, your character will come into contact with the many different aspects of *Threads of Legend* that make it a unique game system. The most notable fact is that characters can research and create their own spells. Unlike other systems though, spells created by one player's character might then be used by other characters in the game. If your character has achieved the correct Circle (experience level), gained enough Legend Points and money, and satisfied other game requirements, you can contribute directly to the game world! You don't have to utilize set spells created by someone else. You can make your own! Who knows, you might create a spell that becomes a mainstay for the world's nethermancers, illusionists, elementalists, and other spellcasters. In a game like *Threads*, there are few limits, but nothing unbalancing.

Not only can your character create spells that contribute to the game setting, but your character can create his own magical weapons. When magical items are created, the magic comes from the story behind the item. For instance, if someone picks up a weapon from a deceased character and wants to use it, he would have to research the item's background to unlock its magic. This is done between play sessions in the form of short prose sent to Great Library of Throal (which approves new items and spells). Like spells, it costs your character money, Legend points, and time to research magical weapon creation. Once these stipulations have been satisfied, the player must write a short story and submit it to the Great Library of Throal. The whole process can be truly rewarding once a player begins to use his legendary weapon.

With the ability to create your own spells and magical items, and the ability to contribute to the game world directly, *Threads of Legend* is a great addition to the family of Network interactive gaming. Those looking for a world that is yet to be fully explored and "written down" should definitely check this game out at the GEN CON® Game Fair. If you enjoy the game system, you could run a round or two at your local convention. Players involved in running or helping out at conventions should seriously consider adding a round of Threads to complement their convention's other Network events. Join the adventure and contribute to the Legend!

For more information on *Threads of Legend*, order the July 1995 issue of the POLYHEDRON Newszine (109) for US$3 from Network HQ.

Andrew Hauptman on LIVING™ Campaigns

LIVING DEATH
A Window On the Past

A sense of history is what makes the LIVING DEATH™ different from other RPGA LIVING tournament campaign settings. LIVING DEATH games take place in the "real world" circa the 1890s—that is, if the "real world" contained magic and monsters. Based on the RAVENLOFT® expansion set *Masque of the Red Death*, LIVING DEATH allows Network players, judges, and writers explore a mysterious Gothic Earth that has been tainted by the forces of the Red Death, an entity of consummate evil. Its agents include evil qabalists, vampires, lycanthropes, and a host of other evil supernatural entities bent on overwhelming the world with the Red Death's evil.

Player characters are ordinary people whose lives were touched (or defiled) by agents of the Red Death. They have been recruited by a secret organization that fights this evil, a group known only by their symbol, the white rose. PCs receive secretive orders from this group to investigate mysteries in all corners of Gothic Earth, sometimes with no more knowledge than a train ticket or a note with a single name scrawled upon it.

Instead of the standard AD&D character classes, LIVING DEATH PCs are represented by soldiers, wizardly adepts, metaphysicians, tradesmen, detectives, journalists, scholars, laborers, mystics, mediums and shamans. Characters are not as powerful on Gothic Earth as they are in RAVENS BLUFF or MALATRA, lacking the raw firepower and potent magic items available in the other LIVING campaigns. But what they lack in power, LIVING DEATH characters more than make up in terms of role-playing potential, for all of Gothic Earth is available for building PC backgrounds. Many LIVING DEATH players I've met have created characters that reflect their own family histories, including Texan cowboys, Scottish highlanders, Australian bushmen, Russian Jews, and French nobles. For the true role-player, Gothic Earth is the ideal setting.

Perhaps best of all, LIVING DEATH players have a chance for their characters to interact with some of the most famous (and infamous) personalities of the 1890s. PC scientists can compare notes with Thomas Alva Edison or Wilhelm Roentgen, share theories on magic and spirits with the famous Harry Houdini, or hear tales from the famous British journalist, Winston Churchill. Fictional characters are numbered among the NPCs of Gothic Earth as well, including Sherlock Holmes, Abraham Van Helsing, and Professor Challenger.

For writers of tournament events, LIVING DEATH offers a unique advantage. All the background information, NPCs, and maps you need are readily available in nearby libraries and bookstores. The rich pageant of human history offers enough source material for hundreds of adventures based on historical events such as the Civil War reparations, the rise of industrialism, and the colonization of Africa.

Besides factual accounts, writers can make use of legends and folktales to design their adventures. Ever wonder what really happened to the Flying Dutchman? Do the ghosts of executed prisoners walk the parapets of the Tower of London? Does the Headless Horseman really stalk the roads of Sleepy Hollow? Read about it and find out!

And if all of human history still isn't enough material for adventures, you can make use of the great works of fiction. Your characters can become embroiled in the plots of Dracula, meet the tragic but dangerous Frankenstein's Monster, or follow the trail of debauchery and murder spawned by the elusive Mr. Hyde. I had a lot of fun taking a little-known Bram Stoker short story and writing a sequel adventure for my first LIVING DEATH tournament. I'm not telling which one—play the games and find out!

LIVING DEATH also allows Network members a unique opportunity to influence the history of the Gothic Earth campaign world. When a LIVING DEATH tournament is a first-run event at a convention, the outcome of the players' actions and decisions becomes a part of LIVING DEATH history, and affects all future LIVING DEATH adventures.

For example, if your group fails to prevent the assassination of President McKinley, he remains dead in future LIVING DEATH events!

This works both ways, of course, and if the players succeed in thwarting one of Moriarty's criminal schemes, you can be sure that he will return later to exact his revenge on the PCs.

The Victorian Age offers a wealth of opportunities for those intrepid souls who are brave enough to face the perils of Gothic Earth. Get into the LIVING DEATH campaign and find out for yourself!

For more information on the LIVING DEATH campaign, order the October 1995 issue of the POLYHEDRON Newszine (112) for US$3 from Network HQ. Ask for the Knacks update too. It's free.

Welcome To The Nightmare

an introduction to horror role-playing

by Gary Labrecque

Few gamers begin by playing horror role-playing games. Every role-player I have met has started with a fantasy role-playing game such as AD&D®. Usually, only after many years of playing do gamers venture into other types of gaming for variety. Unfortunately for some, their first experience with horror RPGs can be discouraging.

One might expect everyone to be accustomed to the horror genre, considering its popularity and ubiquity in our culture. Those fairy tales by the Brothers Grim that we were read as young children are really thinly cloaked tales of dread. How many of you remember *Scooby Doo* or the Gothic soap opera *Dark Shadows* (both of which still play in reruns)? What about *Are You Afraid of the Dark?*, *Goosebumps*, or *X-Files*? Let's not forget the success of writers such as Stephen King, Dean Koontz, and R. L. Stine. Horror movies continue to be popular on TV, at theaters, and at video stores.

If the horror genre is so familiar, why do some players new to horror RPGs become frustrated? The answer is in the expectations they bring to the gaming table. Many try to do the same things they would in a fantasy setting, only to become irritated when they find their character in dire straits. They forget that fantasy and horror are two separate genres with different sets of rules. Let's explore some of these differences.

Victims And Heroes

The first major difference between fantasy RPGs and horror RPGs is that in the latter, the characters are victims. Yes, I said victims. They are victims in the sense that they are just as vulnerable to the menace as everyone else. It's not that the character will not survive, but he or she is in jeopardy.

In horror RPGs, even the smallest encounter can turn deadly in an instant. Take, for example, a pack of rats in a sewer. In fantasy RPGs, this is a trivial encounter for most parties. In horror RPGs, the rats could suddenly swarm a character, crawl over his body, and devour him alive. The hero has become the victim.

Horrible encounters evoke potentially crippling emotions in a character. Fear grabs the character as he or she first encounters the unknown. The carnage left by the menace induces strong aversion. The menace itself elicits horror when finally encountered. Each could cause a character to falter at a critical instant; they even could drive a character to madness. This is unheard of in fantasy RPGs.

But are characters in horror RPGs also heroes? If you are talking about the mighty hero who strides in, weapon in hand, and vanquishes his foes, then the answer is no. Characters in horror RPGs tend to be heroes in the sense that they do what must be done because it needs to be done, and the consequences of failure are unthinkable. They feel fear and uncertainty but stand against the menace nevertheless, many times giving their lives in the attempt. This is the type of hero we have in real life.

No Guarantees

In fantasy, heroes overcome great obstacles and triumph at the end. Some heroes may give their lives but they never die in vain. No matter how dark things get, good is always victorious over evil. Horror offers no such guarantees. Evil frequently overcomes good. Even if good is victorious, lives

are forever changed and never for the better. Death always comes too soon.

A friend playing in my first horror campaign many years ago said to me, "You can do everything right and still end up getting killed." At the time, we both thought it was a strike against the system we were playing. I later came to realize that this is a fact of the genre. In horror RPGs you cannot win every encounter, nor are you supposed to. The concept of balanced encounters just does not exist. Sometimes getting away alive is the best you can hope for—it might be the goal of an entire scenario. Most who play horror RPGs do not mind if their character dies, as long as he or she dies spectacularly.

Emotions Not Thoughts

Horror and horror RPGs push aside rational thoughts and evoke strong emotions. At the climax of a really good scenario, everyone is on the edge of their seat and any sudden, unexpected noise causes the group to startle. The players feel the excitement, the fear, the suspense. They are no longer outside observers but participants in the horror.

Some people find these emotions too disturbing and fight against feeling them. They are thinkers who like to be in control at all times. They tend to enjoy other genres more, because in horror RPGs you are never really in control. You are on a hurtling roller coaster with a madman in charge and no way to get off until the end.

Horror RPGs may draw out strong emotions, but forethought, investigation, and planning are still important parts of the game. They can mean the difference between life and death for your character. Many thinkers continue to play horror RPGs because of these elements. Just do not expect your plans to work every time. Remember: "Sometimes you can do everything right and still get killed."

Perversion of Reality

While fantasy creates a new and sometimes better world according to its own rules, horror prefers to corrupt our own. It lulls us into a false sense of security by presenting believable plot and characters in a familiar setting, then rips that security away. Most horror RPGs are set in a "modified real world," where everything is the same as our world except the Cthulhu Mythos, the Red Death, Unknown, or some other menace exists. While evil in fantasy is dramatic and larger than life, the perversion of horror is subtle and occurs where we least expect it. A seemingly innocent young girl can turn out to be a vampire as in *Interview With a Vampire*, or a car can become a fiend as in *Christine*.

Dark Stereotypes

Fantasy is a genre of valiant heroes and terrible villains to be overcome: the gallant knight, the grey-haired wizard, the scheming dragon, the maiden in distress, the evil sorcerer. The stereotypes of horror tend to be darker, sometimes corruptions of fantasy stereotypes themselves.

Monster stereotypes abound. Lon Chaney Jr.'s wolfman is the classic reluctant monster. Dr. Victor Frankenstein is the prototype mad scientist just as Dracula is still the standard for vampires. Frankenstein's monster is the poster child for misunderstood monsters. The Phantom is the classic madman seeking revenge. Maniacs such as Norman Bates still make us shower with the door locked.

Horror has its hero stereotypes too; most are similar to the fantasy stereotypes mentioned above. The occult expert who dedicated his life to studying and battling evil, such as Dr. Van Helsing, bears similarity to fantasy wizards like Merlin or Gandolf. There is usually a maiden to be rescued by a dashing young man—the gallant knight in modern form. Heroes were mainstays in the older "classic" horror literature and films through the 1960s, but today these images are either absent or corrupted shells of their former selves. Take the recent Bram Stoker's Dracula where a darker, less stable Van Helsing is depicted by Anthony Hopkins. He bears more resemblance to a *Call of Cthulhu* investigator who has lost more than a few Sanity points than to the Van Helsing of the 1931 version of Dracula.

While I have emphasized the differences between horror and fantasy, remember that they are still closely tied. Both stem from ancient legends. Conan and Cthulhu both had their origin in the same magazine, *Weird Tales*. In some bookstores, they still share the same shelves along with science fiction. Many science fiction or fantasy stories contain elements of horror just as many horror stories contain elements of the other two genres.

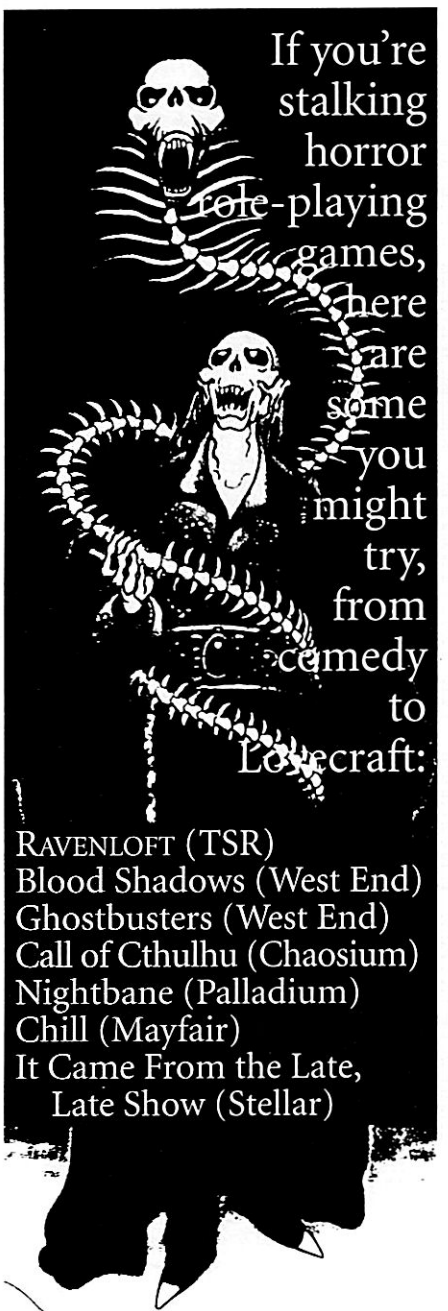
The two genres of RPGs may play differently, but do not let the differences scare you away from trying horror RPGs. Now that you know what to expect, sit in on a session or two. Maybe buy a ticket for a round at your next convention. You might be surprised at how much you like it. For those wanting to start with something more familiar, try the RAVENLOFT® setting, for AD&D.

The RAVENLOFT boxed set and the *Chill* Companion contain excellent introductions to the elements of horror and their interplay in RPGs. For those interested in greater depth, I recommend two books by the modern master of horror, Stephen King: *Night Shift* and *Dance Macabre*. The Forward to *Night Shift* contains a particularly interesting discussion about the genre; the stories are worth reading, too. H. P. Lovecraft's *Supernatural Horror in Literature* is also very good but the language makes it harder to get through.

So, step up to the roller coaster. Sit back and enjoy the ride. It will stop sooner or later...I promise.

❑

They're Out There...


If you're stalking horror role-playing games, here are some you might try, from comedy to Lovecraft:
RAVENLOFT (TSR)
Blood Shadows (West End)
Ghostbusters (West End)
Call of Cthulhu (Chaosium)
Nightbane (Palladium)
Chill (Mayfair)
It Came From the Late, Late Show (Stellar)

Islands in the Multiverse

an overview—part 1

by Roger E. Moore

World of Your Own

Since this column's start in Polyhedron® issue #111, we've looked at the creation of a number of AD&D campaigns with unusual twists: worlds dominated by nonhuman races, worlds under siege by powerful enemies, one world hidden entirely underground and one world with no sun, a world with extremely advanced magic, and several worlds based upon our own Earth's history.

Thanks to the flexibility of the AD&D® game system, thousands of fantasy worlds can be developed by Dungeon Masters and players for years of enjoyable play. Sometimes, however, it is difficult to break out of the standard campaign mold formed from elements of medieval European history and legend, and the works of fantasy authors like J.R.R. Tolkien, Fritz Leiber, and Jack Vance. A change may be called for to freshen the thrills of discovery, conflict, and triumph.

TSR has provided a number of unusual game campaigns with their own twists: the Ravenloft® Gothic horror setting, the Spelljammer® techno-fantasy campaign, the politically charged Birthright® world, and so forth. Even with these choices, many DMs want original campaigns of their own design, new worlds built from the ground up with unique histories and quirks.

This column starts another miniseries detailing unique AD&D campaigns, but one in which we tinker with the geography of the campaign setting itself. In this and the next few columns, we will look at *island* campaigns.

Isolated & Small

These two words describe the essential elements of an island, by definition a small land mass surrounded by water. A broader definition would be: small habitable regions separated by a hostile medium that can be crossed only with difficulty and danger. Within this new definition, many sorts of island campaigns can be created.

An island society can be highly personal, as a limited number of beings must daily cope with each other and their environment. Communities may vary radically from island to island, though they are each separated by only a few miles from each other, and they can evolve independent histories, customs, and wildlife.

Lastly, because each island is small, a large group of islands could fall prey to a single threat that attacks each island individually and destroys its relatively weak defenses. Island populations are vulnerable to many dangers. External threats could include pirates, enemy navies and armies, storms, plagues, and other regional disasters. Internal threats include the rise of tyrannies and police states that brutalize unarmed citizens, and crop failures that produce poisonings or starvation.

The following are a few island campaigns that could be (or have been) developed for the AD&D campaign. Note their similarities as well as their differences.

Oceanic Islands

The most obvious island campaign is that set among a large group of islands in an ocean. In fantasy literature, the four Earthsea novels by Ursula K. LeGuin best depict this sort of setup (*A Wizard of Earthsea, The Tombs of Atuan, The Farthest*

Shore, and *Tehanu: The Last Book of Earthsea*). By all means, read these!

Among official AD&D game worlds, the following island regions exist as potential campaign locales. I won't try to list all of the accessories and game materials describing these island settings, as there are so many available.

* AL-QADIM campaign: Al-Faraq, Al-Qirmiza, Al-Tarik, and Al-Zuhm island chains, and numerous other southern islands. (I'm not counting all of the zaratans, of course.)

* BIRTHRIGHT campaign: Khinasi domains of Ghamour and Suirene; Isle of the Serpent; Anuire isles of Albiele, Baerghos, Caelcorwynn, and Dantier; Brechtür isles of Krakenstaur and the Zweilunds; Torova Temylatin.

* COUNCIL OF WYRMS campaign: Io's Blood Island Chain.

* DRAGONLANCE campaign: Western islands (Sancrist, Northern Ergoth, Southern Ergoth, Enstar, and Mostar), Dragon Isles, Blood Sea Isles, Spine of Taladas (see this column in issue #119).

* FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign: Evermeet, Lantan, Moonshae isles, the Nelanther, Nimbral, and the Pirate Isles of the Inner Sea.

*GREYHAWK campaign: Lordship of the Isles, Sea Barons isles, Spindrift Islands.

* Kara-Tur campaign: Kozakura, Wa.

* MYSTARA campaign: Kingdom of Ierendi, Minrothad Guilds, Oceania, Ochalea, Serpent Peninsula isles.

There are also AD&D campaigns that use our Earth as a setting. Gothic Earth of the RAVENLOFT *Masque of the Red Death & Other Tales* boxed set and the "historical" Earth of the Historical Reference Sourcebook series (HR1-HR7) are good examples. A campaign using either set of rules could each be played out among our world's islands, particularly in the British Isles, as was done in this column in issues #117-118. One other Earthly campaign mentioned in this column is island-centered: MAGITECH Earth's Madagascar, in issues #115-116.

Wildspace Islands

Wildspace is itself a hostile medium, and collections of small, closely spaced, habitable asteroids and worlds could be used as the core of a SPELLJAMMER island campaign. Travel from world to world could be accomplished by spelljammers, *teleport* spells, or other means. Aside from the addition of 3-D "naval" play, this campaign has many similarities to the Oceanic Islands described earlier. If you think of the big worlds like Oerth, Toril, and Krynn as wildspace "continents," the island connection for the smaller worlds becomes even clearer.

The most famous wildspace "island" is of course the Rock of Bral, detailed in the 1989 SPELLJAMMER boxed set and in SJR5 *Rock of Bral*. It is implied that there are other worldlets close to the Rock, on which food is grown for the Rock's people. Other collections of wildspace islands include the following:

• SJR2 *Realmspace*: Tears of Selûne, moons of Glyth, Garden, and earth bodies inside Coliar. The Rock of Bral is often recommended for placement in the Tears of Selûne.

• SJR6 *Greyspace*: The Grinder, Borka, Greela, and earth bodies inside Edill and Gnibile.

• SJR7 *Krynnspace*: Moons of Krynn, moons of Zivilyn, earth bodies inside Zivilyn, Stellar Islands. The fate of these worlds in Krynn's Fifth Age is unknown, but SPELLJAMMER campaigns could be set in earlier Krynnspace. Or, you could skip the Fifth Age entirely, as was done in this column in issue #119.

• The *Astromundi Cluster* boxed set: Astromundi Cluster.

Planar Islands

A third type of AD&D island campaign involves planar islands: small demiplanes and partial planes usually found floating in the Ethereal Plane, as described in the PLANESCAPE boxed set, the *DUNGEON MASTER Option: High-Level Campaigns* tome, and the AD&D 1st Edition *Manual of the Planes*. The Demiplane of Shadow and the Demiplane of Dread (a.k.a. the RAVENLOFT campaign) are the best known "big islands" within the Ethereal Plane, though other peculiar regions have been described. The lands presented in the old AD&D adventures EX1 *Dungeonland*, EX2 *The Land Beyond the Magic Mirror*, and WG6 *Isle of the Ape* are bizarre partial planes created by the GREYHAWK campaign demigod Zagyg.

Travel through the Ethereal Plane from one of these "islands" to another is accomplished using any of the means presented in the Planescape or Manual of the Planes rules. Such travel is obviously dangerous at best, considering the number of fiends one can meet when wandering the planes. For this and other reasons, a planar-island campaign would work best for high-level characters, unless supported by a spot like the city of Sigil to give low-level wayfarers a chance to stay alive.

The Ravenloft demiplane itself is structured like a collection of islands, with one large central land, the Core, surrounded by small Islands of Terror. Anyone in a RAVENLOFT campaign is automatically in an island campaign!

Other Island Campaigns

An island-hopping campaign could be set up in the Astral Plane, with high-level adventurers moving among populated floating rocks or fortresses. The *Chronomancer* rules allow a DM to set up an "island" campaign in which discrete areas of land are connected across time, with heroes never ranging far from any particular town, castle, or dungeon. The Nightworld campaign described in this column in issue #114 is an island campaign, as overland travel between the surviving city-states is hazardous, turning the cities into land-based "islands." And the floating continents of the HOLLOW WORLD setting, inside of Mystara, could be used as the basis for an island campaign.

The key elements for an island campaign, again, are a number of small, relatively isolated lands surrounded by a hostile medium that can be crossed with difficulty. This allows a variety of adventure settings to be developed in close proximity, adding to campaign life.

Next month: more island campaigns, and problems living in limited space. ❑

WHAT DO RPGA CLUBS DO?

by William R. Gilsdorf

Short answer? Just about anything that you want them to! Sponsor and run a convention, pick a charity to benefit, write tournaments, develop and present skits, do something nice for the community, get together for a dinner or a birthday party. Anything!

Role playing gamers share certain attributes. They seem to read a good deal, are comfortable with math to a certain point, and are willing to "play", assume a persona and attempt to act, mostly through voice and declared action. While gamers may have other hobbies, finding people who share an understanding of the joy they find in this character, or that adventure, can be a challenge.

Gaming clubs can provide a group of contemporaries that can share the excitement and the challenge that each member finds in various aspects of role playing games. It seems almost predictable that when people who enjoy gaming get together and share with each other, either by playing, recounting, or undertaking a new project, they develop an excess of the spirit of achievement. That excess may be what entices clubs to try and help a cause. Or maybe the need just to do something nice for each other.

I have the pleasure of being a member of ARC (Atlantic Region Convention) Fellowship. As a club, we're probably quite strange (With apologies to all the members, what follows are my memories and not an official history). We were started at a Convention, as I recall, as a way to have an entry to a team event. Not because we were team oriented, but it was the only way to play this particular game. ARC was the brain child of Carl Buehler and Nicky Rea, who served as our first two presidents. We were folks that lived all over the South in groups of two to six. At a given convention we might have twenty members present. This gave us a reason to go to dinner after the Con and preserve the fellowship for another hour or two.

We all agreed when we started that we would compete as a club when we wanted to, but what we were really were about was good gaming. We encouraged courtesy and patience. We wanted to stand, as gamers, for the same principles that lead to a successful adventure. Party unity, and allowing and encouraging each member to succeed and contribute to the success of the group. We never expected to win anything. It was more important that we enjoyed the effort.

Then came the RPGA Decathlon. We had a ball. Who would try to write, direct, rehearse, and present a skit when the actors wouldn't even see each other as a group until two hours before show time? ARC would. Who would consider letting a new member play that critical game when you have members that have played for years? ARC would. Who would have as much fun playing with their newest member (a three-month-old child that was an RPGA member before she was born) as they did playing the hottest tourney? ARC would.

We never expected to win anything. It was more important that we enjoyed the effort.

ARC was a relatively new club when the Decathlon competition began. We have done well, and I share with pride that we have won the Decathlon four of the six years that it has existed. That pride is not just in ARC, but in each member. It is also in the other clubs. In every competition we have sat with and been judged by other clubs. It is their integrity, patience, and joy of the game that infects us and encourages us. Club members from most other clubs have joined us for a team event, or an after con dinner, or let us join them.

What do clubs do? They help you preserve those wonderful feelings you get when you play. You can find heroism and challenge in helping others, whether it's charity or a new member. You can find joy and companionship in adventures recounted and experiences shared. You can find friends that share your interests. You can find what we all play, an Adventuring Party. Most importantly, you can find Fellowship.

Raleigh, North Carolina

The Workforce of the Network

by Craig Petillo

So, you find yourself a member of the RPGA Network, the largest adventure gaming-based organization of its kind in the world. But you still find something lacking in your regular gaming meeting with your friends. Perhaps it is difficult to get the "gang" together due to school, work, or family obligations. Or perhaps you live in an area where contacts with other interested role-players are few and far between. You may find the answer to these and other woes by joining an RPGA Game Club or starting one of your own.

The benefits of belonging to such an organization are unparalleled. Network Club members from across the globe are the workforce of our Network; by and large furnishing the "lion's share" of Judges, Coordinators, and Headquarters volunteers for the GEN CON Game Fair, WINTER FANTASY, and many other conventions around the world. Wherever Network events are run, you can be sure that Club members are participating.

Network Clubs help their memberships in an

Welcome to a World which may seem to some a distorted reality.
by Kathy Bayles

I speak of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, and other role-playing games. Here at the Guild of the Elven Blue Mage gaming club, we play games ranging from SEGA to standard role-playing games. Currently we have an ongoing play-by-mail game to which any may apply. And it's free! Simply write to: Survival, PO Box 1675, Jacksonville, OR 97530 c/o Kathy Bayles.

Our club was founded many years ago by myself, Kathy Bayles, President/ Secretary, Glen Coggins, and many other unique people. The club ran under several names until we decided on our present name and to be chartered by the RPGA Network in 1991. Our club motto: "There is none wiser than an elf."

The Network has helped us get off the ground in so many ways, and remaining active seems like such a small thing to pay them back. I wish there was more we could do. The Guild of the Elven Blue Mage meets every 3rd Saturday of the month at my house, 1001 Huener Lane, #4 in Jacksonville, OR, from 1-3 PM. We don't often play games then, but we go over many important things at hand. Currently we have two sponsors: Beyond Comics in Medford, Oregon, and Galaxy Books and Games in Grants Pass, Oregon. We are plannig on holding our own game convention in spring of 1997, so if you have any suggestions or ideas write to me and let me know.

Currently, our membership stands at 11 in number, but more are welcome anytime. We have no club fees, so come join the fun. Hope to hear from you all soon. If you want to have fun, you've joined the best: the RPGA Network.

Portland, Oregon

Network Clubs

clubs are something we're very proud of at the network. individually, our members are *quick-witted, fascinating* people. collectively, they often seem *unstoppable*. and we're not too modest to tell you that. (neither are they)

exchange of ideas, with gamers you might not otherwise have met. Many clubs offer their members discounts at local hobby shops, conventions, game day activities, newsletters, web-sites and computer games, not to mention the camaraderie which comes from working together toward common goals.

Currently, over one hundred gaming groups, in Canada, the U.S., Australia, Italy, England, Northern Ireland, France, and Singapore, have chosen to affiliate with the Network.

The RPGA Network conducts special activities targeted specifically toward Club members, such as the annual Network Clubs Decathlon, Team/Clubs competitions at most large conventions, writings contests through POLYHEDRON Newszine, workshops, seminars, and others.

Exchanging new and different ideas, expanding the horizons of your imagination, fun, and camaraderie; these are the foundations from which Network and its Clubs are built. With a bit of elbow grease and desire, you can have all of this and more, in an RPGA Club of your very own.

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

THE KNIGHTS' TALE
by Linda Baldwin

I've been a member of a number of clubs in my time. Most have had a certain structure: you know, charter, constitution, by-laws, that kind of thing. And so it was with our club, the Brooklyn-based Knights of the Empire—for a little while.

But there was a problem. We were a pretty darn chaotic group. Originally brought together by an ad in the Newszine, we took nearly two years to actually form a club. We couldn't seem to agree on anything, ever. Even the constitution was thrown out when we realized it said no officer could hold an office for more than two years. (David Samuels is President-for-Life. Period. End of story. Donations of Potions of Longevity and Cream of Long Years cheerfully accepted.) So much for organizational structure.

So what do we do (besides argue)? Our gaming activities are pretty wide-ranging, including not only roleplaying (currently at least seven game systems and over a dozen campaigns), but board, miniature, and card games as well. Very few games are regularly scheduled; even club meetings have to be planned around our busy lives.

We also look for ways to give back. Before our first club meeting was ever held, we formed a team for AIDS Walk New York. We were given a sign of things to come; the heavens opened for us. (That year is fondly remembered as "The Monsoon" by AIDS Walk veterans.)

We also hold an annual convention, Knight Games, which donates all profits to charity, one of the few cons which does this. (See Convention Calendar for details.) We concentrate on making it small, novice-friendly, and accessible to metropolitan area players who can't get to the major cons.

It's not what I expected when I first answered that ad in the Newszine. But it's all ours.

The Bronx, New York

MEMBER SERVING

TSRO Stone (Tim Hernandez) "Providing an enjoyable place..."

It's late, and you're out cruising America On-Line looking for something interesting. You hear rumor of a TSR site on AOL, cleverly hidden at Keyword: TSR. You check it out and lo and behold, gamer heaven !!!!

After checking out the cool graphics on the splash screen, the button marked "Live" catches your attention. You promise yourself you'll check out the other interesting areas, DRAGON® Magazine Online, the Software Library, Download of the Month, TSR Merchandise, Q&A, and New but,... Live is the place for you now. You click on the button and ready yourself for action.....

The first thing you notice is a number of conversations going on, covering a number of topics, all gaming related. People are coming and going, the text scrolls up your screen at a good clip, so fast at times it seems you can't keep up! Just as you decide now might be a better time for a game of Solitaire, you notice a person in the middle of all the chaos directing traffic, keeping the conversation on track, and greeting everyone as they come and go. This person has an odd screen name too—TSRO _____ . Intrigued, you ask who this person is, and get the following answer.

The TSRO (TSR Online) staff is a group of people that provide all the customer service for the TSR Live site on AOL. They are responsible for hosting the live chat rooms, doing file library and message board maintenance, running online Demo Games of TSR products, and insuring that people who stop into the TSR Online area have a good time. Providing an enjoyable place for gamers to come and game, chat, or find information is the sole purpose of the TSRO staff.

There are male and female staffers, living all over North America, from Florida to Minnesota, and New York to California. They come from all walks of life and vocations but all share a love for gaming, and a desire to help people enjoy their hobby. Many are RPGA members and game regularly at any convention they can get to either alone or as part of a Network club.

Armed with this helpful information, and getting the hang of how to handle the chat, you slowly ease your way into a conversation. As the weeks pass you find yourself more involved with the conversations, uploading your most awesome character sheet to the file library, and submitting a character for an upcoming online game with a bunch of new cyber-gaming buddies. You also hear rumors of an RPGA Online Area of TSR Online coming soon, with lots of cool "members only" stuff.

Without realizing it, you have become another satisfied regular of TSR Online. And I and my fellows smile, knowing we've done our part.

America Online, Anywhere

Thomas Prusa "...and answered hundreds of questions..."

I became a Regional Director eight years ago. There were only a few of us then, and I had four states (MO, IA, NE, and SD). Since then a lot more have come on board, and I'm down to two states, which is fine. What do I do as Regional Director? I get to go to a lot of cons, and meet a lot of good people. It's more than that, but that's the most fun. If you talk to other RDs, you're sure to get other answers, but in a nutshell, I see a Regional Director as being your link with HQ, someone you can talk to face to face and get some answers. Or some help, if you have a problem. In the past, I have provided RPGA members with names of other members in their city or area, provided cons with judges, or shown up to judge myself (always my personal preference), provided prizes for RPGA tournaments (supplied by HQ, of course), talked to HQ to help clear up a problem for a member who wasn't getting his POLYHEDRON, provided tournaments for a con that didn't get theirs on time, and answered hundreds of questions, to some of which I actually knew the answer. In a rare display of teamwork, the other RDs in my area decided that we needed something to help get support for all the cons in our area. We discovered that the NE region had a regular Regional tournament, so the Great Plains AD&D Regional was born. It is in its fourth year, and we have had a champion from four different states, and participants from 10 different states. And since the only way to qualify is to play in a feature tournament at a con in our region, it has led to more members attending conventions across the six state region (IA, MO, SD, NE, KS, & OK). No single con is responsible for the Regionals, it is the responsibility of the RDs. Since we started, I know that the Midwest (OH, IN, IL, & MI) also have added a Regional. Someday, we hope to see a national.

Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBER SERVING

Members make the Network work, always there for a beleagured friend

John Paul Carney "...elf help is good..."

What it means to me to be an RPGA Network club president is that you make your best effort to have and support Network-sanctioned games at any or all local cons. Your only dilemma is if there are no local cons to go to. That is when presidents will create their own conventions. Try to find a site around a main highway or interstate (it makes it easier for out-of-town players to find). Restaurants are a good place to start; the managers are always looking for people to fill their tables, and it's usually free too! Get your dates set with the manager and you are off!

Now that you have dates set, you need GMs and staff (elf help is good—ask Santa). You also need—and this is very important—a state sales and use tax permit. This will vary from state to state, so check withyour local comptroller's office. It may not seem important, but if you are caught accepting cash for a public event, even if it's only 20 players and one dealer's table, the fines will be over $500 in Texas. A permit is either free or inexpensive, so you can't lose.

If you are lucky to fill the venue, GREAT! Try to have GMs on hand to run more games. You can never have too many GMs, but you can have too many players.

In closing, make sure that the players who come to your con know about your club. Have sign-up sheets for poeple to fill out to join your mailing list. More importantly, inform them of the Network and have sign-up forms ready. If you need sign-up sheets, the Network will send them to you.

Austin, Texas

Don Weatherbee " ...I saw things that needed doing..."

I'm a chemical engineer, and my job keeps me pretty busy. I've still managed to help out the Network. For the first couple years that I was a member, I played almost exclusively, then Dungeon Mastered for a couple of years. Then tried my hand at writing tournaments and running conventions. Before long I was managing databases, writing computer programs, etc.

I desired to help out almost from the beginning because I saw so much that could be done. But back then, as a new member, it was not easy to be "helpful". I felt I had to prove myself to those in charge or in the know. I had to demonstrate that if I said I was going to do something that I did it. The Network doesn't need talkers (it has all kinds of talkers—after all it is a role-playing organization), but it does need committed doers.

I don't do what I do because of recognition or expected rewards; I do not necessarily derive direct enjoyment from most of the things that I do for the Network. A volunteer is just that—a volunteer—a member doing things for other members. I have done the things I have done for the Network because I had skills I could bring to bear, because I saw things that needed doing, because I care a lot about members, and because I believe in the idea of "continuous improvement"—if there is a better, faster, cheaper, easier way of doing anything, you just have to be open to the possibility.

I don't wait for HQ to tell me what to do. If I identify something that needs doing, I volunteer to do it and then let HQ know what I have for them.

Anybody can do almost anything for the RPGA Network. You just have to decide you want to and let the Network know that you're out there and willing to help. Consider that I wrote this and I'm an engineer (I have a genetic aversion to writing). If I could do this...well you get the point. VOLUNTEER NOW, THE NETWORK NEEDS YOU!

Lake Hiawatha, New Jersey

Don is one of our most valuable volunteers, and handled some key tasks that Network HQ could not have accomplished by itself in 1996. He'll be receiving a special service award from the Network at this year's GEN CON® Game Fair members' meeting. Just a few of the things that made him so valuable to the Network in the last year were:

- Gamemastered, Marshaled, Coordinated at the Game Fair and other conventions;
- Rendered invaluable assistance for Network HQ at at least dozen conventions, including providing computer support for the Game Fair;
- Acted as overall coordinator for "A Weekend in RAVENS BLUFF™" (10 locations in 1995 and 12 in 1996);
- Researched and wrote LIVING CITY Magic Item Certificate Program (including creating over 1200 official magic item certificates for players);
- Wrote a new Convention Management Program intended to permit remote entry for tournament scoring packets;
- Setup, maintained, and established a team of RPGA Members to help maintenence the LIVING CITY Player Character Database (with over 4500 player characters);
- Personally helped raise approximately $8000 for charity (Disadvantaged Kids Youth Camp in NJ) through conventions; and
- Set up and organized the RAVENS BLUFF City Watch, then turning it over to another capable member this year.

In addition, Don has written tournaments, helped countless new members get involved with the LIVING CITY campaign, and was directly involved in recruiting almost a hundred new members for the Network.

We stand in wonder about Don's seemingly inexhaustable energy, but Don will be the first to admit that scores of other Network members worked hard to make these thing possible.

WRITING FOR THE RPGA

ERIC BOYD
POLYHEDRON

TOURNAMENTS
KEVIN KULP

POLYHEDRON® Newszine is the product of contributions from RPGA® members. Who writes for it? Everyone—game designers, freelancers, amateurs, even engineers. (I fall in the last three categories.) I've been enjoying RPGs since I was 11 (I'm 28 now...you do the math), and I've never met a player or DM who didn't have at least one creonly write one, maybe two tournaments a year, often in lesser-played systems like Paranoia. Then I realized that most Network authors are like me—as opposed to those who seem to write a module every week with time left over to create a new campaign world and balance their checkbook. Network authors tend to be people who write because they have fun doing it and have an idea for a game that they want others to share. I think I've figured out at least three main reasons why members get involved with writing RPGA tournaments.

When I was asked to explain why I write tournaments for the Network, it took me a few minutes to figure out the reasons. I'm not what you would call a prolific writer. I've written RPGA tournaments for about four years now, but I

Fame!

Well, not always. I'm not a household name from writing tournaments, but I do have fun writing them. Part of it is the knowledge that either dozens, or if I do a good job, hundreds of people will play my game. It's a good feeling to have some stranger come up to you at a con and tell you how much they liked the adventure you wrote. Do that enough, and people begin to remember your name, and then you can act really superior in front of all of your friends until they throw dice at you.

Challenge!

Writing a tournament isn't easy. You need a good plot, it has to make sense, and (unless it's LIVING CITY™) you need to spend time making exciting player characters. It's worth it though, when you see your own ideas run as popular con events (note the above comment on acting superior).

I first started writing tournaments because I didn't like the modules I was playing at conventions, and I hoped that I might be able to help. When my friends told me to stop complaining and do something about it, I sat down and started plotting out what I thought would be a good adventure. From there I came up with a plot, and then it was just a matter of typing the thing!

It's not always that simple, though. Every so often I promise a module and then agonize through it. I think my best work happens when I have a great idea that won't go away. It might be an idea for an interesting group of characters, or a plot line that seems like fun. Whatever the case, when I have a unusual idea that I can't fit into my AD&D campaign, I try to write a module with it.

Endless Riches!

Once again, maybe not! But the RPGA does pay for TSR-based modules. In addition, writing tournaments for the RPGA is one of the best ways I can think of to start getting yourself published. Many people have secret dreams of actually making money as a game designer, but have no idea where to begin. Here it is, folks! Writing adventures for other people to run helps you perfect your design skills and learn what works. I've seen more than one author whose first try at tournament

How do I know if I have a good idea?

Looking through old issues is a good idea. New kits, spells, monsters, variant rules, tournament tips, and helpful articles for struggling DMs are perennial favorites. Be creative!

The best way to evaluate an idea is to pretend you're new to your group. Will the article catch interest? Will it benefit a campaign? Is it a time saver for harried DMs? The Network likes these types of articles, because readers enjoy and use them. The best authors sprinkle campaign nuggets throughout their articles, so that even if it isn't immediately useful, a DM will come away with a handful of ideas. Articles by Roger Moore and Ed Greenwood are excellent at this.

How do I know if I have a good submission?

A great idea does not necessarily generate a great submission. If you want to be published, remember that editors are more demanding than your high school English teacher. Aim for an "A+". With modern word processors, there's absolutely no excuse for skelling mistakes. Or incomplete sentences or Capitalization errors if you readproof a few times before sending your submission. Unpolished articles aren't likely to be read very carefully.

What is the process of getting something published?

The first step is to get writer's guidelines. The second step is to research—look through old issues of POLYHEDRON and other publications for examples. The third step is to write a query letter—this will save you a lot of heartache if your idea doesn't fit. The fourth step is to write and polish your submission and send it in with a SASE. Finally, you'll get a letter of acceptance or one of encouragement to try again. Remember, even if your labor of love doesn't get accepted on the first try, that doesn't mean it's a bad idea. Revise and resubmit it, or write up a new idea. My *Forgotten Deities* column got rejected four times by TSR before it was accepted.

What are the rewards?

POLYHEDRON pays a reasonable rate. It's not enough to live on, but it will offset some convention and gaming supplement expenses. Seeing your name in print is a big draw for many writers, and might make your parents proud. ("Our little prodigy is published!") It certainly gives the opportunity to network with other writers. For me, the chief reward has been a sense of pride when I learn of other gamers using my ideas. Finally, if you want to break into the industry, you must build a record of publications. writing I've worked on two projects for TSR as a freelancer: left a little to be *Faiths & Avatars* and one due in 1997—after *Forgotten Deities* was desired, but "noticed." There's no who ended up guaranteed success, but the producing consistently excellent work. Newszine is a great place to start!

So, looking back, it seems like I write modules for fame, challenge, and endless riches. It might not be quite that simple... but I'm having fun.

Woburn, Mass

Cambridge, Massachusetts

All About POLYHEDRON®

POLYHEDRON Newszine is one of the primary reasons many people join the Network. The Newszine is a combination of newsletter and magazine. As a newsletter, it is your central source of information for Network activity and policy. As a gaming magazine, it's one of the oldest in the industry (15 years!), with a history of providing surprisingly good gaming material to our 10,000 members.

In the good old days, it seems that Jim Ward wrote half the Newszine. The Newszine relentlessly covered such gems as BOOT HILL®, GAMMA WORLD®, and TOP SECRET®. Between here and there it's been a long, strange trip. Even though Jim Ward doesn't write exactly half of it any more, the Newszine is quietly flourishing in the role-playing game world. The main reason for the existence of the Newszine is as a member information resource. Yet with all the gaming magazines available to the role-playing audience, what makes it different from other magazines?

The biggest difference is that, like public telelevision, it's supported by members like you. Every word in the Newszine is written by members, or occasionally, pros in the industry. You, as well as anyone, can write for the Newszine.

We are also the main source of information for the LIVING CITY™ game setting, and other LIVING™ campaigns. Campaign updates, news on the war, gossip, and official rulings all appear in these pages.

In the next few pages are forms and guidelines concerning submissions to the POLYHEDRON Newszine. Feel free to photocopy them for personal use and to encourage others to use the Newszine as a resource.

This page and the next give the writer's guidelines. Read them carefully, especially the ethics guidelines. TSR has strict standards for every product we make, and POLYHEDRON is no exception. The ethics guidelines mainly stress that whatever we produce is intended to be fictitious, and our writing should reflect that intent.

Pages 28 and 29 contain guidelines for all of you budding artists out there. This will tell you what we're looking for (we're always looking), and how to get our attention.

Page 30 is a copy of our Standard Disclosure Form (SDF). For every submission you send, you need to include a SDF. Network staff cannot even look at a submission without one. This goes for both POLYHEDRON submissions and tournament submissions. They are mandatory.

Page 31 holds our convention and classifieds forms. In a regular issue of POLYHEDRON, you would see at least one page devoted to upcoming conventions around the country and another page filled with messages from members wanting to buy or sell game material, looking for pen pals, searching for members in a certain area wanting to play a game...or any message one member wants to send to another.

WRITER'S GUIDELINES

The RPGA Network accepts submissions for POLYHEDRON Newszine from all its members. Articles that offer suggestions on tournament play, forming a gaming club, and improving playing or gamemastering skills are quite welcome.

We also love manuscripts dealing with general gaming topics, articles that provide support material for home campaigns, and those which offer a new way to look at some part of the game. Among these are articles dealing with our RPGA LIVING™ settings. Gaming articles could detail interesting locations or non-player characters appropriate to the chosen setting, such as a troupe of entertainers who have chosen to winter in RAVENS BLUFF™ (part of the LIVING CITY™ campaign) who are watched closely by agents of the city, or denizens of a dock bar in Seattle where Shadowrunners can pick up info and gear with no questions asked.

Make sure that the submission is based upon the most recent edition of the game in question.

Step 1: Query Letter

The road to publication begins with a query letter, in which you give us an idea of what your article will contain. Include in this letter the approximate length of the article and a short, detailed description of exactly what you will cover. It would also help if you give us an idea of when the finished article could be ready. Sending a query letter saves you time and allows us to help you tailor your article to meet the needs of our readers and the themes of upcoming issues.

When you send your query, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) so that we can reply. Your letter must be typed neatly, and should include your address, telephone number, and Network membership number. You do not need a separate letter for each submission idea; you may include multiple ideas in a single letter as long as you describes the length and contents of each of the proposed articles.

We will not accept manuscripts that have not been preceded by a query letter; they will be returned unread if you have enclosed a SASE. If you do not enclose a SASE, we have no choice but to throw the manuscript away.

Step 2: Submission

If we like your idea, we will ask you to send us the completed article. You must send a hard copy (neatly typed, double-spaced, on white letter-quality, 8 1/2 inch by 11inch paper) and an electronic copy (on 3 1/2 inch disk). We prefer that the electronic copy be in Microsoft Word version 5.1 for Mac, WordPerfect for DOS, or Word for Windows. Also, it is a good idea to include an ASCII file as a backup.

A Standard Disclosure Form must accompany each submission.You should also send a cover letter highlighting any special features or other considerations within the submission.

Your name, address, home telephone number, and Network membership number must appear on the upper right corner of the first page of the submission. Your name and the page number must be on each subsequent page.

Indicate on the outside of the envelope in which you send the manuscript that you have enclosed a Newszine submission.

Each submission must include a SASE for the editor's reply. If your article is more than a few pages long and you want it back, send a larger envelope with sufficient postage to cover the return mailing. Persons outside the United States should send International Reply Coupons (do not send cash or foreign stamps for return postage). Submissions without sufficient return postage will not be returned. Make sure you keep a copy of the manuscript for your records. The Network cannot be held responsible for lost manuscripts. Mail all correspondence to:

RPGA Network
Attn: Polyhedron Newszine
201 Sheridan Springs Road
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Ethics Guidelines

All printed articles in POLYHEDRON® Newszine must be of high quality and in good taste. To achieve that goal, it is important that you follow the TSR, Inc. Code of Ethics:

¥ Never portray evil in an attractive light. Evil characters should be foes.

¥ Do not give explicit details and methods of crime, drug use, or magic that could be duplicated and misused in real-life situations.

¥ Do not present crimes in such a manner as to inspire others to imitate criminals.

¥ Portray drug and alcohol abuse only as dangerous habits, not as something desirable or "cool."

¥ Do not represent agents of law enforcement, such as guards and constables, in such a way as to cause readers not to respect current authorities.

¥ Dialect, slang, and colloquialisms are fine in dialogue. However, we discourage excessive use, and do not recommend them in descriptive passages.

¥ Profanity, obscenity, and vulgarity are unacceptable. Do not portray or imply lust and sexual perversion.

¥ It is all right to use drama and horror, but avoid detailed sordid acts and excessive gore. A good writer can imply situations without graphic detail.

¥ Do not attack or even portray current religions. It is okay to portray ancient or mythological religions, but only in compliance with the other ethical considerations presented in Network writing guidelines.

¥ Magic is an integral part of many fantasy role-playing games. However, we will not consider submissions that include actual rituals, such as incantations and sacrifices.

Presentation and Style

Any article submitted to us must be written in as professional a manner as possible. Spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors detract from our ability to give your submission a fair reading, as do syntax and organization problems. We strongly urge that you edit your manuscript thoroughly. You should show it to someone with strong editorial skills; another person's viewpoint may improve your article. Often we do not have time to properly edit manuscripts with numerous errors or which seem confusing. This can result in an otherwise acceptable article going unpublished.

Make sure that your article is complete. It must have all relevant game statistics, maps, and any other necessary support documentation. Place any tables, charts, or maps at the end of your article. Any sketches or maps you include must be clear, legible, and done in ink. This makes it easier for our mapping artists to reconstruct your map. It is not necessary to provide artwork; we will have our artists take care of this.

Please do not try to make the manuscript look fancy by using "artistic" fonts; these are more difficult to read. We are interested in what you have written and how it is constructed; a simple font will do.

Because the Newszine is only 32 pages, we cannot often publish long articles. We encourage you to submit articles of approximately 750-1500 words. The maximum length is 3,000 words except in special circumstances. We usually have around 750 words per page, which puts the maximum article length at around four pages. An 8 1/2" by 11" double-spaced page averages 250 words, so manuscripts should be no longer than 12 or 13 pages.

A note regarding Letters to the Editor and other similar submissions: The guidelines outlined above are primarily for writers interested in submitting articles to the Newszine. If you are submitting a Letter to the Editor, you do not have to follow these guidelines. You should, however, make sure that submissions are as clear and legible as possible. If we can't read your letter, we can't adequately respond to it.

Step 3: Payment!

Yes, it's true, we actually pay for the right to publish your article. Our rates run about $.04 a word, a competitive rate. This is a flat fee; we do not pay royalties. If more than one person collaborated on an article, we need a signed statement from all authors concerning the division of payment. Authors from the United States must provide us with their Social Security Numbers for tax purposes.

If your article is accepted, we will send you three copies of a contract for your work, which you must sign and return to us. Within sixty days of the publication of your article, we will pay you the amount agreed in the contract, and will enclose a copy of the contract signed by us, so you will have a copy for your records. If you are under the age of 18, a parent or legal guardian must also sign the contract.

Once you sign the contract, TSR, Inc., owns all publication rights to the article. (There are exceptions, particularly cases in which the article is about a game system not owned by TSR, Inc.) This means that you cannot resell the article to another publication, even in revised form, without our written permission.

The work must be your own. If you use material from other sources, you must accurately identify your sources. Make sure that quotes match exactly with your source. Be careful not to plagiarize (do not take someone else's writings and attempt to present them as your own). Authors bear full legal responsibility for their writing. ❑

ARTIST'S GUIDELINES

If you are interested in submitting artwork to POLYHEDRON® Newszine, you should get to know the Newszine; our format and interests may differ from other publications in the role-playing industry, and this affects the sort of artwork we prefer to publish. An understanding of role-playing games is also beneficial in helping you tailor your artwork to portray the settings we employ.

Style

Both realistic renderings and stylized art are welcome. However, any skewed proportions, scaling, or perspective should be done intentionally and professionally.

We are not interested in simple portraits unless we specifically request one. Submitted artwork should show action. It does not necessarily have to be dramatic or violent action, but it should portray the subject of the drawing as doing something in keeping with his character.

The mood of the drawing is also critical. Strive to illustrate the emotions of the subjects of the work as accurately as possible.

Avoid Stereotypes

Not all mages have long, white beards and wear robes; not all knights have thick biceps, wear shining armor, and rescue local damsels-in-distress (besides, this is the 90s–it may be the damsels doing the rescuing); and not all adventuring priests look like an armored Friar Tuck. We would like a fresh look, a new perspective, or innovative subject matter.

Use professional quality art supplies (including paper). Art done with lesser quality materials is often difficult to reproduce.

Any artwork we publish must abide by our ethics guidelines. We will not print any work portraying nudity, sexual

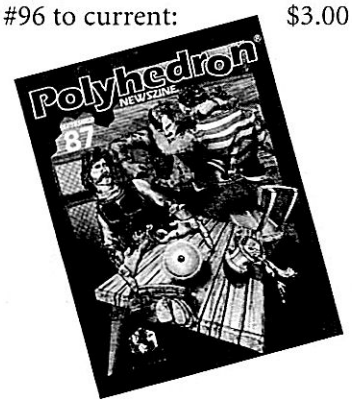
POLYHEDRON® Newszine Clearance Sale!

We here at Network HQ are up to our armpits in really fine paperstock—the kind that says POLYHEDRON on the front.

Here's how you can get your back issues, too!

Back Issue Price List:

Issue #1:	$10.00
Issue #5:	$10.00
Issues #6 and #7:	$7.50
Issues #14-18:	$6.00
Issue #20:	$5.00
Issues #26-30:	$3.50
Issues #32, #33:	$3.50
Issues #35-49:	$3.00
Issue #50:	$7.50
Issue #51:	$3.00
Issue #53:	$3.00
Issues #56-60:	$3.00
Issues #63-72:	$3.00
Issues #75-94:	$3.00
Issues #96 to current:	$3.00



Looking for that old article on *Embrol Sludge's Eatery and Shell Shoppe* for your home LIVING CITY™ campaign? Want to collect the complete series of Roger Moore articles? You can! Get a back issue of the Newszine. We have tons of these, but they aren't doing anyone any good sitting in our stockroom. You can get an index to the Newszine by checking out the AOL TSR file download area or sending $1 to Network HQ.

Use this handy order form, but make a photocopy so you don't ruin your issue. When ordering, you must give the issue numbers you want.

Name: _____

Membership Number: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

List issues and prices you are ordering: (postage is free in the US, Canada and Mexico)

Issue #	Quantity	Price	Issue #	Quantity	Price

Total for Order: _____ (international members please enclose a postal reply coupon for return postage)

Send this form to:

RPGA Network, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

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situations, sordid acts, or excessive violence or gore. Furthermore, we cannot consider any work that defames current religions or ethnic groups.

New Artists

The Newszine welcomes art submissions from new artists. However, any new artist desiring to work in the Newszine should first submit a portfolio. This collection of artwork must contain approximately 10-12 samples of pen and ink work no larger than 9" by 12". Unfortunately, we cannot publish color art, so we cannot accept any paintings or slides of such work. Pencil art often does not have sufficient contrast to allow for high-quality printing, so we cannot accept it. If your portfolio contains acceptable work, then at some point we may ask you to do a piece for publication. Because the Newszine is a monthly, timeliness is important. Good quality work that is not turned in on time has as little value as unfinished artwork that does arrive on time.

If you do not hear from us, it doesn't mean we're ignoring you. Please resubmit your portfolio occasionally with updates so that we can get a feel for your work over time. Persistence pays off.

Rights and Payment

Normally, the Newszine purchases art in one of two ways: Either we purchase it from a portfolio submission, or we request a specific piece on contract. Upon agreement to use a particular piece of artwork, we will send you three copies of a contract which you must sign and return. We will sign them, and return one to you. The contract gives POLYHEDRON Newszine all publication rights to the artwork. You will be paid within 60 days of publication and our receipt of the signed contracts. All published artists will receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which their work was published. Our rates vary, but are approximately: $300 for a black-and-white cover, 40-50 dollars for a full-page black-and-white interior illustration, and a proportional amount for smaller black-and-white interior art.

❑

TSR, Inc. Standard Disclosure Form

I wish to submit the following materials to the RPGA® Network, subject to all of the conditions below. Working title of submission and brief description (please print or type):

Submission Type: POLYHEDRON® Article Tournament Contest Entry

Submission Title: _____

Brief Description: _____

I submit my materials voluntarily on a non-confidential basis. I understand that this submission by me and its review by the RPGA Network does not, in whole or in part, establish or create by implication or otherwise any relationship between TSR, Inc. and me not expressed herein. I further understand and agree that the RPGA Network, in its own judgment, may accept or reject the materials submitted.

I agree that the RPGA Network may have a reasonable period of time to review my submission. The Network will return my submission to me provided it is received by the Network with a self-addressed stamped envelope. The Network shall not be held responsible, however, for items or materials which are accidentally damaged or lost.

I understand that the acceptance by the Network of this disclosure does not imply or create 1) any financial or other obligation of any kind on the part of the RPGA Network except as herein provided, 2) any confidential relationship or guarantee of secrecy, or 3) any recognition or acknowledgment of either novelty or originality.

I understand and agree that if the submission utilizes or is based on characters, settings, or other materials owned by TSR, Inc. or if the submission contains trademarks and/or other proprietary material owned by TSR, I shall not be free to submit the submission for publication to any person or firm other than TSR.

I further understand and agree that the Network has the right to revise and copy edit any accepted version of the submission for content, style, clarity, typographical errors, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization in accordance with standard usage and/or style manuals or accepted dictionaries and encyclopedias. I also understand that the Network and TSR, Inc. have the right to publish the submission at their own expense in such style, form, and manner and at such a price as they deem suitable.

I warrant that the submission never has been published and that it is original and does not violate the rights of any third party. I also warrant that I am the sole owner of the submission and that I am of legal age and am free to make agreements relative to this submission or that I am the authorized representative of the submitter (circle one: Parent, Legal Guardian, Agent, Other:_____), who is the owner of the submission.

Signature: _____
Submitter's Name: _____
Date: _____
Address: _____
_____
Phone: _____
Phone (day): _____
Email Address: _____

Please return this form and submitted materials to:

RPGA Network
201 Sheridan Springs Road
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Tournament Submissions Only

If this tournament is submitted for a specific convention, complete the following:

Convention Name: _____
Date/Location: _____
_____
Convention Coordinator: _____
Address: _____
_____

As the author of the tournament, you have a choice in how your tournament is edited. In either case, final sanctioning of the tournament still lies with HQ. If your own editorial changes do not satisfy the staff, your tournament will not be sanctioned.

[ ] I want editorial review of my tournament. I understand that this will slow the editing process and that Network HQ must still approve the event.

[ ] I would like HQ to edit my tournament.

POLYHEDRON® Newszine

Convention Announcement Form

Send this form at least six months before your convention. Type or Print.

I would like to place the following advertisement in the Newszine. I understand this is a membership service and there is no charge. I also understand the Network reserves the right to edit my advertisement. Write one character on each line below. Leave the line blank if a space is desired.

Convention Name: _____ **(Max. 35 Characters)**

When: _____ **(Max. 15 Characters)**

How Much: _____ **(Max. 25 Characters)**

Where: _____ **(Max. 40 Characters)**

What's Happening: _____

_____

_____ **(Max. 135 Characters)**

Who to Contact: _____

_____ **(Max. 50 Characters)** Network "Spotlight" conventions (those which place an RPGA* membership form in their onsite program) can use up to 300 characters in "What's Happening."

Convention Coordinator: _____

Tournament Coordinator: _____

Address: _____

Country: _____ **Postal Code:** _____

Day Phone: _____ **Evening Phone:** _____

Send this form at least six months before your event to: RPGA Network, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva WI 53147
Early receipt of this form increases the likelihood of early placement.

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POLYHEDRON® Newszine

Classified Advertisement Form

Name: _____ **Network Membership No.:** _____

Address: _____

Country: _____ **Postal Code:** _____

Day Phone: _____ **Evening Phone:** _____

I would like to place the following advertisement in the Newszine. I understand this is a membership service and there is no charge. I also understand the Network reserves the right to edit my advertisement. I agree to limit the announcement to 100 words (500 total characters). Write one character on each line below. Leave the line blank if a space is desired.

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Send this form to: RPGA* Network, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva WI 53147

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NOTES FROM HQ

Now It's Up To You...

But That's Not All!

This is the end of our Welcome issue, but where this issue stops, you start. I hope, whether you're a new member or an old fogey (like Scott), that you learned something worthwhile. The Network has a great many opportunities for you to get involved and make the Network work for you.

This issue was designed to show you how far the Network ranges, and what you can do as a member. And, really, we didn't even get to it all here. Our demo program is starting up, and everybody thinks it's the best thing since hardback rules. If you want to demo TSR or other Network supported games at your local games and hobby shop, write us a letter or email, and put "Demo Team Volunteer" somewhere conspicuous on the envelope or subject line.

It's your turn, new member. Write letters, join clubs, fill out all these forms and send 'em in. Get involved.

Thank Yous

An issue like this makes any editor sweat, and after this particular one, my keyboard is dripping. Thanks to each individual author who made my job simpler.

Special thanks go to Steven "Stan" Brown for coming through with last-minute caricatures. Stan, I'll never destroy your only source of income.

Enormo-thanks to Scott and Robert for finishing up this issue while I was off playing DRAGON DICE™ at Origins.

A Final Word from Scott

Before we say "til next time," I'd like to say a few words about the Network to the fine people who compose it.

Network members have constituted most of my body of friends for the last seven years. With fellow members I've shared cerebrations and cups, attended weddings and festivals, fought dragons and deadlines. We've shared so much over the years, and we've all worked together to build a Network that we could be proud of.

Every time I go out to a convention or retail store, I meet new members, new friends. These new folks are every bit as enthusiastic and talented as those of us who've been there, done that. Each time I meet one such, I am renewed in my faith in the Network, and the Network's mission. It is the innovation and freshness of new members that tempers the experience and committment of old (or is it the other way around?).

Where I am I going with this? Well, I want each and every Network member, those new and old, to know that those of us who work for you at HQ do so because we genuinely enjoy it, and because we feel it's truly worth doing. We labor in what we see as members' interests, based on observations, comments, and feedback from members. We need to hear those kinds of things from members; we labor in the dark without them. We do not always make the decisions many members want, but we endeavor to make decisions that work both for members and for those who serve them.

But I want to let each Network member know a secret that a friend of mine (former Network Coordinator Jean Rabe) taught me—you get out of the Network in direct proportion to what you put in. If you're a member who merely waits for this Newszine to arrive, then that's all you're going to get. I can't get you more, as hard as I try. If on the other hand, you do what the contributors to this issue have done (go out and get involved), then you'll reap the rewards, the enjoyment, and the camaraderie that they've harvested.

Getting involved (as opposed to merely joining) can be the turning point in a member's association with the Network. The good folks who've shared their experiences with you in this issue can tell you that. When you get involved, then you really get something out of the Network.

Let me close with a story (as is often my wont): Once upon a time a gamer was looking for other people to game with. He searched in vain; the conventions in his neck of the woods were lame. Then he went to a Big Con. It was so much fun he decided he needed to bring that kind of excitement (Network excitement) home to the cons at home. Quickly the Network events became THE most popular gaming events in the state. His judges were being asked as guests (yes, guests) at other cons. Eventually that gamer ended up working for the largest role-playing game company on the planet. But enough about me...